

BLACKS IN NEW JERSEY

1986 REPORT

A REVIEW OF BLACKS IN SOUTH JERSEY

SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE
NEW JERSEY PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute wishes to thank the Black United Fund of New Jersey for its generous financial support toward the production of this Seventh Annual Report.

We at the Institute believe the Blacks In New Jersey report series contributes, in a constructive way, to the discussion of important issues of public policy in this State.

The response to our efforts by the Black United Fund of New Jersey suggests that they concur. We deeply appreciate their support.

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THE BEGINNING OF A PARTNERSHIP

The New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute Board of Directors is pleased to announce that they have begun discussions with the Black United Fund of New Jersey regarding a partnership between the two organizations intended to serve as a basis for future publications on the state of Black New Jersey.

Seeds of this relationship were firmly planted recently and productive results should be apparent by the time a 1987 Report is completed.

The Black United Fund of New Jersey, Inc. (BUF/NJ) is a professional state-wide philanthropic organization that awards grants to several non-profit organizations throughout the state.

The primary mission of BUF/NJ is to create and perpetuate self-sufficiency and self-help within our Black communities through a program of financial support and voluntarism.

Programs that address the issues of Teen Pregnancy, Leadership Development, Housing, Arts and Culture, Education and the extensive presence of Female Headed Households receive the highest priority for funding and represent the Black United Fund of New Jersey's fundamental commitment and responsiveness to human service needs.

The Black United Fund of New Jersey has distributed funds to agencies and projects in the following counties of New Jersey:

Atlantic, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Passaic, Cumberland, Somerset, Union and Warren.

When we overlay the mission and objectives of BUF/NJ onto the mission and objectives of NJPPRI, a natural and almost inevitable partnership emerges. NJPPRI will continue to identify and analyze problems of critical importance to the black residents of New Jersey while BUF/NJ will incorporate those analyses into a funding plan designed to provide solutions to the problems.

Lloyd Oxford, President of the Black United Fund of New Jersey, says that his organization enthusiastically supports the emerging partnership because "it represents an opportunity to establish a systematic approach to identifying and effectively resolving problems facing Blacks in New Jersey."

The Board of Directors of both BUF/NJ and NJPPRI anticipate a long and productive relationship. We hope that our faithful readership will subscribe to our future publications on the status of Blacks in New Jersey.

ROBERT C. HOLMES
President, NJPPRI

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NEW JERSEY PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute (NJPPRI), established in 1978, is a volunteer, non-profit, tax exempt organization. NJPPRI is concerned with identifying, analyzing and promulgating public policy issues significantly affecting the Black residents of New Jersey. The organization seeks to present these issues for appropriate public discussion and, thereby, to contribute to the development of strategies that address these issues in ways beneficial to New Jersey's Black population.

NJPPRI is statewide in focus and attempts to work cooperatively with public policy oriented individuals and organizations throughout New Jersey.

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FOREWORD

In this edition of Blacks in New Jersey, NJPPRI departed from its usual focus. Rather than examine issues that are statewide, the purpose is to shed light on the Black experience in South Jersey. The eight southern counties of New Jersey lead the state in population and employment growth rates. These demographic and economic changes are occurring in a region that is also experiencing a brisk growth rate in its Black population.

It is appropriate, therefore, for NJPPRI to examine Blacks in South Jersey. For too long New Jerseyans, Black and white, have tended to direct most of their attention to the more industrialized and urbanized northern portion of the state. But the shift from an industrial economy to a service economy, especially the introduction of casino gambling in South Jersey's recreational economy, has given the southern counties a growing economic advantage. How are Blacks, who have a rich history in South Jersey, faring in the region's current socio-economic environment? This is the question to be answered in the seventh annual report of NJPPRI. The framework for answering this question reveals the uniqueness of the Black experience in southern New Jersey; links the present to the past; and identifies a direction for wrestling with contemporary and future issues.

Bruce Ransom
Editor
Smithville, NJ
November 15, 1986

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The 1986 edition of Blacks in New Jersey is a snapshot of Blacks in the eight southern counties--Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Ocean, and Salem. This is a unique focus for NJPPRI. Indeed, this is the first systematic attempt by anyone in recent years to examine Blacks in South Jersey. The several articles have been written to provide an in-depth analysis of some aspects of the Black experience in South Jersey. These articles clearly demonstrate the need for continuing research into the topic and establishes the desirability for future regional and comparative analysis.

This volume begins what promises to become a fruitful research strategy. By following a similar framework, the authors not only provide revealing data and analysis, but they collectively chart the direction for future study. A historical perspective is given by each of the writers. Further, changes over time are used as important mileposts for assessing the current status of Blacks in the region. Equally important, is the comparison with Blacks in North Jersey; with the general population statewide; and with the white population in some instances. The approach suggests that current issues and their corresponding public policy responses cannot be separated from their historical roots.

Although each of the authors provides a historical context for their analysis, Clement Price establishes the links between the past and the present for Blacks in South Jersey. Price

develops his analysis around the theme that the history of Blacks in South Jersey is a "story of group survival and slow progress." As he elaborates on his thesis and moves his analysis into more recent times, he identifies issues that have persisted over time and those that are of recent vintage. For Price, the erosion of the tightly knit nineteenth century Black community raises fundamental questions for social scientists and policy makers as they contend with issues in the Black community since the Second World War.

Some of the complexity of contemporary life among Blacks in South Jersey emerges in the regional profile. Richard Roper, Robert Holmes, and Gwendolyn Long provide a portrait. They disclose that in recent decades, especially since 1970, the rate of growth for the Black population in South Jersey has been rather remarkable. Although small town living has always been a part of black settlement patterns in the region, in recent years the trend has become more prominent. As the proportion of Blacks residing in the region's cities declines, especially Atlantic City and Camden, the rate of growth in the Black population outside the urban centers, especially in Burlington and Ocean counties skyrockets.

Interestingly, although income levels are lower for Blacks and whites in South Jersey than for North Jersey residents, the gap between Black and white incomes are narrower in Southern New Jersey than in North Jersey. Further, the profile suggests that Blacks with relatively high incomes are moving into some areas, notably Burlington County and Cherry Hill in Camden County. But a high proportion of Black families are headed by females with

low income, and many of these families receive some form of public assistance, including state-mandated child protective services.

The connection between changes in the regional economy and the economic status of Blacks is presented by Yvonne Duggett. Her historical and contemporary analysis of Blacks in the resort and recreational economy of Atlantic County is a compelling assessment of Blacks in the service economy. For example, she gives an illuminating analysis of the dominance of Black workers in Atlantic City's nineteenth century economy and links between the past and present. Further, she raises questions about the casino economy and opportunities for black economic development. The casinos are unique to Atlantic City, but Duggett's analysis has implications for jobs and black entrepreneurship in other South Jersey communities.

Black economic development and Black political empowerment complement each other. Black settlement patterns in South Jersey, however, mean that Black elected officials tend to be present in the traditional Black areas more often than in new and emerging ones that are attractive to Black professionals and the middle class. For example, the 1986 roster of Black elected officials compiled by the Joint Center for Political Studies reports that Black mayors hold office in Camden and Atlantic City. Black mayors are also present in the heavily Black small towns of Lawnside and Chesilhurst. In Willingboro, a community where the Black population mushroomed since 1970, there is also a Black female Mayor. Further, the region's lone Black member of th

New Jersey Assembly is elected from the Camden area and currently the only Black member (a female) of a county governing board is in Atlantic County. With the exception of Willingboro, these are not the "hot spots" for Black population growth.

Although other elected officials, primarily municipal council and school board members, are concentrated in predominantly Black communities and dotted across other towns, new and emerging communities for Blacks face organizational challenges. This issue becomes evident as Blacks seek inclusion in all aspects of life in these communities. Patricia Reid-Bookhart discusses in historical and current terms the complications Black organizations face in Burlington County--the county with the highest Black growth rate since 1960. Her analysis is illustrative of the obstacles Black organizations face and the imperative for Black collective action in developing communities.

Reid-Bookhart's analysis is given additional illustration by Regina Waynes Joseph in her historical documentation of a long standing, though small, Black presence in two Burlington County communities--Moorestown and Mount Laurel. Joseph's article, reprinted from NJPPRI's 1983 report, establishes an enduring Black presence in these towns, thereby providing a context for the New Jersey Supreme Court's Mount Laurel decision on affordable housing. The surge in the number of Blacks in South Jersey creates pressures for affordable housing to accommodate newcomers, but Joseph's discussion raises policy questions about housing for Black newcomers, who makeup a growing Black middle class, and Black "locals," who have lived in many of these

communities for decades.

The articles in this report make a contribution to understanding public policy issues facing Blacks in South Jersey. The emphasis on connecting history with current matters draws out the uniqueness of the region's Black community. Perhaps this initial effort will lead to more informed discussion, fresh policy responses, and more importantly, a reassessment of the strengths and possibilities for Blacks in southern New Jersey. Clearly, the current generation of Blacks, regardless of station in life, must expand upon the foundation and traditions nurtured by our ancestors.

WE KNEW OUR PLACE, WE KNEW OUR WAY
LESSONS FROM THE BLACK PAST OF SOUTHERN NEW JERSEY

CLEMENT A. PRICE

The Afro-American experience in southern New Jersey is marked by qualities commonly found in the history of the African diaspora. Blacks in the eight counties that comprise South Jersey survived the tragedy of human slavery. They built institutions symbolic of their humanity and their desire for group progress. Most important, over the many years of difficulty imposed on their lives, they maintained control of their communities. These were not easy triumphs. In New Jersey, there was for the longest time mistrust and hostility towards Blacks in law, custom, and in the behavior of private and public organizations. To be Black in New Jersey was to be viewed as an outsider, even though people of African ancestry were among the earliest immigrants to the land that is bound by the Atlantic Ocean and the Raritan and Delaware Rivers.¹

A Search for Progress. In the main, the history of Blacks in southern New Jersey is a story of group survival and slow progress. Much of the story is unfortunately obscured by the problems of limited source materials that have frustrated the study of Afro-American history generally. The story of slavery in southern New Jersey, for example, illustrates the problem of limited source material: The institution lasted for over one hundred and fifty years, yet much of what can be said about it

relies on documentation drawn from white society. The Africans' remarkable tenacity in a land which kept them bond laborers; their evolution from African to Afro-American; their familial, religious and social customs during the transformation are important but difficult concerns to grasp because of the limited source material available to the student of New Jersey history.

What we do know, however, can be stated forcefully: Black life in southern New Jersey during slavery and afterwards involved what might be called a "search for group progress" by the first three generations after the end of slavery through their allegiance to locale, to the small settlements of their ancestors. It may also be said that because of the unique character of the region, Afro-Americans there have historically evolved differently than their brethren in the northern counties of the state. New Jersey's paradoxical development in its race relations may account for the different courses taken by northern and southern Black communities.

The Quaker Influence. During the colonial period the northern counties--then referred to as East Jersey--were influenced powerfully by the economic and social life of New York. The southern communities of West Jersey, on the other hand, were drawn to the ways of Philadelphia. That divided identity produced sharp conflicts in many aspects of New Jersey life, most perceptibly in the state's treatment of its African population. In East Jersey slavery was widely supported while in the West, the institution was increasingly attacked. Not surprisingly, the greater resistance to slavery in what is now called South Jersey left an indelible mark on the lives of Blacks

and the white majority. Freedom from slavery, which allowed blacks to promote their institutional and social development, has a longer history in the southern counties, especially those which were settled by the Quakers and to some extent subscribed to the Quakers' abhorrence of servitude.²

Although the gradual abolition of slavery in New Jersey following adoption of the emancipation law of 1804 marked a new era in the history of the Afro-American population, Blacks in the southern region had been manumitted in increasing numbers since the American Revolution. The freeing of one's slaves, although a private act, was a compelling demonstration of slavery's immorality in the society, and it can be viewed as one reason why South Jersey Blacks were early advocates of libertarian ideals in the nineteenth century.

Advocates for Equality. A survey of the existing documentary literature reveals that in the southern counties, Blacks aggressively advanced the cause of freedom and human equality.³ From the early nineteenth to the twentieth century, their churches were organizations devoted to human and spiritual uplift. The secular organizations, too, were watchful over the race's interests and emblematic of its desire for progress. Nineteenth century Blacks sought to encourage group elevation through educational, political, and moral improvement; condemned the continued enslavement of their brothers and sisters in the southern states and assisted their flight to freedom in the North.

Several of South Jersey's Blacks were dedicated advocates on these important fronts. One of them, John Rock of Salem, reminded New Jersey that its discriminatory treatment of Blacks defied logic and the nation's creed. In particular, he attacked the racially exclusionary provisions of the 1844 state constitution which limited the suffrage to white men. In 1850 Rock observed:

Although the...Declaration [of Independence] declares that 'all men are created free and equal'...those noble words, in their common acceptation, do not and cannot apply to the disfranchised people I am now speaking of; because indirectly, you deny the disfranchised are men. You say that all men are created free and equal, and at the same time, you deny that equality, which is nothing more nor less than denying our manhood. If we are not free and equal (according to the Declaration of Independence), we are not men, because 'all men are created free and equal.'⁴

Rock's compelling argument had virtually no impact on suffrage rights in New Jersey. The right to vote was extended to Blacks in the state only after the fifteenth amendment to the United States Constitution was ratified in 1870.

Social and economic injustices, especially segregation and poverty, of that era encouraged Blacks in the southern counties to pursue two strategies designed to insure their survival and uplift as a group: (1) articulating principles the society claimed to hold dear--equality, justice and fairness--offering their harsh experience in New Jersey as an example of the state's hypocrisy (As I have argued in an earlier essay on this theme, Afro-Americans in the nineteenth century professed moral arguments and ideals that would be eloquently restated a century later by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.) and (2) encouraging solidarity and community development. Despite their lack of

economic power, Blacks there achieved some measure of group integrity. Indeed, with the exception of poverty, the most striking trait of segregated Black communities by the late nineteenth century was their cohesiveness and the vitality of their organizations.

The Afro-American Church. The Afro-American church was by far the most important and durable of Black institutions during the formative era of race progress in southern New Jersey. Its history dates back to the organizational efforts of Richard Allen, the African Methodist Episcopal Bishop in Philadelphia. The recipient of a comparatively large investment of resources, both human and financial, the church, quite simply, was the one institution which the society permitted Blacks to build without interference. As such, it had a comparatively disproportionate influence within the Black community.

From the mid to late nineteenth century, southern New Jersey's religious leaders were conspicuously involved in the all-important Negro Convention Movement. Between 1840 and 1880, ministers petitioned the state legislature on behalf of those Blacks whose voices were blunted by poverty and poor educational opportunities. They also helped to give their parishioners a collective identity through the churches they helped to build.

As historian Spencer Crew has observed, "the focal point of the independent organizations developed by Camden's black community between 1860 and 1920 was the black church." The church, he notes, "helped ease the increasing Afro-American population in their adjustment to urban life." What also needs to be said is that these institutions over time came to

differentiate the Black community along class lines. Some churches, such as Camden's Macedonia Methodist Episcopal Church and the older African Methodist Episcopal churches were by the late nineteenth century institutions with a well cultivated middle class outlook; they were, in short, the symbols of Negro betterment in a largely impoverished community. Whatever the class position of the Black church, Dr. Crew is accurate when he observes, "these multi-purpose institutions lessened the impact of segregation and discrimination on the residents of the Black community and offered Afro-Americans opportunities denied them in the larger society."⁷

Confronting Segregation and Promoting Self Reliance. The rise of the church and other organizations coincided with the resurgence of intolerance towards Blacks around the turn of the century. The period, called the nadir of American race relations by historian Rayford Logan, was a bleak one for Black Americans. Because of the continuation of segregation, it also seems to have been a difficult era for Blacks in the southern counties of New Jersey.

Generally, Black Americans in the twentieth century used a dual strategy to confront segregation that was similar to earlier efforts. They vehemently attacked it as wrong and un-American, yet within their segregated world they sought to build the human and organizational basis for survival as a people. Over time, a divided racial identity resulted from the internal conflict of fighting for entrance into American society on the one hand, and adhering to racial sensibilities drawn from a Black ethos on the

other. As W.E.B. DuBois observed in 1903: "One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideas in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."⁸ Such has been the course of modern Afro-American history in New Jersey--the striving for acceptance by the larger society and the building of a racially distinct way of life.⁹

The residential districts to which Blacks were excluded were both manifestations of their lowly status and, it should be remembered, their haven. Moreover, there were examples of Blacks seeking to live on their own terms, independently. Segregation was, of course, distasteful, but its corollary in Black life--self reliance--gave small communities an opportunity to nurture their culture. Actually, there is considerable evidence that Black life in southern New Jersey revolved around securing a place where the race could control, to some extent, its destiny. Those efforts were modest because of the limited resources of all but the most fortunate Blacks. Nonetheless, they represented genuine efforts by hard pressed workers to build communities in which their families could live peacefully.

During the nineteenth century, at least four towns having a predominantly Black population were started in southern New Jersey. The best know was Gouldtown in Cumberland County. Nearby was Springtown. In 1898, Blacks fleeing Wilmington, North Carolina's bloody violence established Whitesboro as their refuge, and in Camden County, Blacks founded the municipality of Lawnside.¹⁰

Black communities in the predominantly white cities of the region formed an array of voluntary organizations suggestive of self reliance during the years of migration and settlement. But life in the emerging ghettos of the larger cities--Camden and Atlantic City--carried with it problems far exceeding the limited capacity of Black institutions and organizations. Their efforts to promote education and social uplift were, in retrospect, mainly emblematic of racial pride.

What they lacked in economic and political clout was found in diversity. Indeed, between the late nineteenth century and the World War II period, most southern communities had a penchant for various kinds of organizations. In the cities there were national organizations, most notably local chapters of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; statewide organizations, including the New Jersey State Federation of Colored Women's Clubs, clearly the largest and during the period the most active association founded by Blacks here; and there was a litany of fraternal organizations, professional associations catering to the nascent middle class, and social clubs.¹¹

The activities of these organizations, the triumphs and setbacks of the race, and the events of interest to Blacks were diligently reported in the South Jersey's Black press. In the early twentieth century, there were a surprisingly large number of race newspapers: Atlantic City had nine at various times between 1900 and 1950; Blacks in Camden supported four between 1915 and the early 1930s; and in Burlington County the New Day lasted from 1936 to 1938. These were, of course, modest efforts in

journalism, yet they were important. Without the Black press the
life of the community would have been all the more obscure.¹²

Segregation and Black Education. Another example of self
reliance in southern New Jersey in the years between the late
nineteenth century and the World War II period is found in public
school education. As a result of the pioneering scholarship of
Marion Thompson Wright, we know of New Jersey's curiously divided
racial policies in public education, or as Dr. Wright observed in
1938: "In this state almost every conceivable practice governing
the education of Negro children could be found."¹³ When the
state legislature in 1881 prohibited the exclusion of any child
from public schools because of nationality or color, racial
segregation in education became increasingly indefensible.
Gradually, in the northern counties, with the exception of
Trenton in Mercer County, Black and white children attended the
same schools. Yet, that reform was not practiced in many school
districts in the southern counties. There segregation continued
until the adoption of the 1947 constitution that prohibited it.

Several studies of New Jersey education during the first
half of the twentieth century have shown the complex forces that
kept "Jim Crow" alive in the southern counties. Racial
intolerance, to be sure, was the most important contributing
factor; it was not, however, the only one. According to Dr.
Wright, many Black families, recent migrants from the southern
states, tolerated racial separation because it had been practiced
in their native states. Moreover, Black teachers and supervisory
personnel supported segregation well into the twentieth century

because they believed their job security would be threatened if black schools were closed. Because of these concerns, the battle over Black education in the years between 1881 and 1947 represented an interesting paradox in New Jersey Afro-American history and education.

The rising Black middle class in the northern counties fought against the Jim Crow practices commonly found in the South. They fervently attacked the Bordentown School for Colored Youth, the so-called Tuskegee Institute of the North, because of its emphasis on industrial education for Blacks. Indeed, in a virtual replay of the early twentieth century debate between Booker T. Washington, the founder of Tuskegee, and W.E.B. DuBois, the advocate of a Black "Talented Tenth," Black leadership in New Jersey fought, sometimes bitterly, over the virtues and perils of racial segregation in southern New Jersey. Those who cautioned against the dismantling of the Black schools were mainly local Black teachers and principals in the counties of Camden, Atlantic, Gloucester, Burlington and Salem. Their opponents were based in the northern counties of Mercer, Middlesex, and, especially Essex and Hudson. ¹⁴

Southern New Jersey educators argued that not only would the job security of Blacks be imperiled by the closing of all-Black schools, but also Black children would face an unsympathetic and possibly hostile educational environment if sent to predominantly white schools. In a region where community life was preserved through an adherence to tradition, as was the case in much of South Jersey, such a view represents an understandable attachment to educational institutions that were nurtured since the

nineteenth century.

In her study of Black education in southern counties between 1900 and 1930, Wynetta DeVore found that for many Blacks the separate school was not necessarily a demeaning symbol--it was often a source of pride and accomplishment for Blacks, despite its admittedly inferior quality when compared to the more substantial schools in white communities. As James Moore recalled his experience with Black teachers in a separate school in South Woodstown:

I can remember both Mr. and Mrs. Richardson used to emphasize Countee Cullen, Booker T. Washington, and Marian Anderson and Paul Robeson, Roland Hayes, and all the prominent Blacks....[Mr. Richardson] tried to instill a lot of pride, a lot of race pride and encourage us and emphasize the better things of life.¹⁵

The opponents of separate educational facilities for Blacks and whites, however, mounted a far superior argument. They had to their advantage the growing national emphasis on racial equality which emerged after the Great Depression of the 1930s. They benefited from the considerable influence of leading Black spokesmen and women, including Lester Granger of the National Urban League; J. Mercer Burrell, an attorney from Essex County; Fred and Richard Martin, two Black businessmen from Hudson County; and, after 1941, Dr. Marion Thompson Wright whose scholarship helped set the stage for the final defeat of Jim Crow practices in the schools. In 1947, when the new state constitution outlawed racial segregation in the public schools, it brought to a close a long and troubled era in southern New Jersey history and marked the beginning of another.

Crisis in Black Urban Life. If community values and a strong sense of group solidarity were prominent symbols of southern New Jersey Black life, the twentieth century has increasingly placed those beliefs under enormous pressure and seemingly eroded the material basis for Black group uplift. The segregation era, despite its many indignities and constraints on the upward mobility of Blacks, coincided with the development of a cohesive yet fragile community life in which Blacks felt secure. It was not so much that segregation enabled southern New Jersey Blacks to bring a sense of order to their lives; rather, it was their creative adaptation to the rigors of life in America, of which segregation was a major part.

Both Spencer Crew's work on early Black life in Camden and the late Herbert Foster's work on Atlantic City have highlighted the positive character of Black life in those two important cities. "Although blacks, who were so vital to the success of the recreational economy, were separated in...many ways from the mainstream of the life of the resort, they built a vibrant community of their own on the North Side," Foster has observed. Crew, in looking at contemporary Black Camden has recently noted that "the challenge facing black organizations...is how to maintain the position of importance they held during the late
16
nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

The work of these scholars tells a story of progress in the face of great odds. Since the end of the segregation era, however, the progress of Afro-Americans has been overshadowed by the persistent crisis of Black urban life. What makes the problems in public education, housing and employment for Blacks

so frustrating is that they are worsening in the wake of the civil rights movement of the 1960s.

There are, to be sure, tangible improvements in Black life in southern New Jersey and they would, I suspect, be applauded by the founders of the nineteenth century Black towns and institutions. However, there is still much that would sadden that generation. For example, the New Jersey Public Policy Research Institute, reports that the number of New Jersey Black families living below the poverty line in 1980 was 24 percent, an increase from 19 percent in 1970; 34 percent of all Black children in New Jersey lived in poverty in 1980, which represented an increase of 6 percent since 1970. And only 43 percent of Black children in the state lived with two parents in 1980.¹⁷

These conditions are basically inconsistent with what we now know about Black family life in New Jersey during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In Camden in 1870 and 1880, child rearing families headed by married couples respectively accounted for 73 and 75 percent of all families. Even in the northern New Jersey city of Elizabeth, 90 percent of all families with children were headed by married couples in 1870! Similarly, in Atlantic City the prevalent lower- to working class Black society of that resort had a remarkably stable, nuclear family system during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Areas for Future Study. The existence of tightly knit Black communities in the beginning of this century, when compared with

the much discussed social decay now crippling Blacks in the urban centers of southern New Jersey, raises several important questions that social scientists and public policy makers must consider. But before the questions can be answered, there is a need for a more extensive research base on Black life in southern New Jersey since World War II. We need to explain the social consequences of demographic shifts that have taken some Blacks, usually the poorest, into the cities of the region and the upwardly mobile to suburban communities. The impact of migration and industrial work on Black folk culture in the region also needs to be studied. It may be true that the strengths of the race and the ways to develop its potential are to be found in the rich and cohesive past South Jersey Blacks shaped for themselves.

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BLACKS IN SOUTH JERSEY: A PROFILE

Richard W. Roper
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Southern New Jersey, consisting of Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Ocean, and Salem Counties, is the setting for the 1986 edition of Blacks in New Jersey. An historical and contemporary examination of the region's Black population is the focus of the report. In this chapter, however, a general profile of the presence of Blacks in the region is presented. In particular, population and income trends are examined. The placement of children in the protective care services of the New Jersey Division of Youth and Family Services is also included.

The presentations are organized and reported to enable a comparison between Blacks in South and North Jersey. In several instances, comparisons with the white population are also presented. The indicators in this study are the starting point for a profile of Blacks in South Jersey and for regional comparisons.

Population Trends

Growth Rates. Tables 1 and 2 show that since 1960, the Black population in New Jersey rose at a higher rate than in the general population. For the years 1970 - 1982, this difference in rate of growth is particularly marked for Blacks in South Jersey. For example, New Jersey's population grew from 6,066,782 in 1960 to an estimated population of 7,430,000 in 1982 - an increase of 23 percent. In southern New Jersey the total population jumped by

53 percent between 1960 and 1982; in North Jersey the total population increased by 15 percent.

TABLE 1

POPULATION TRENDS: 1960-1982

	New Jersey	South Jersey	North Jersey
1960 Population			
Total	6,066,782	1,234,606	4,832,176
Black	514,875	119,157	395,718
Regional Distribution Among Blacks, 1960		23.1	76.9
1970 Population			
Total	7,168,164	1,576,891	5,591,273
Black	770,292	162,159	608,132
Regional Distribution Among Blacks, 1970		21.1	78.9
1980 Population			
Total	7,364,823	1,854,081	5,510,742
Black	925,066	207,980	717,086
Regional Distribution Among Blacks, 1980		22.5	77.5
1982 Population (Est.)*			
Total	7,430,000	1,891,400	5,538,600
Black	928,315	211,832	716,483
Regional Distribution Among Blacks, 1982		22.8	77.2

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, General Population Characteristics: New Jersey, 1960, 1970 and 1980 and *New Jersey Department of Labor, Office of Demographic and Economic Analysis (Based on 1980 percentages remaining constant).

By comparison, the rate of increase for Blacks in New Jersey is 80 percent over these years, rising from 514,875 in 1960 to an estimated 928,315 in 1982. The number of Blacks in South Jersey increased from 119,157 in 1960 to 211,832 in 1982--a 78 percent increase. The number of Blacks in North Jersey jumped to 716,483 in 1982 from 395,718 in 1960--a 81 percent increase.

Table 2 shows that the Black population continues to increase at a faster rate than the the total population. For example, since 1970 New Jersey's general population rose by approximately 4 percent.

TABLE 2

CHANGE IN POPULATION: 1960-1982

	New Jersey	South Jersey	North Jersey
<u>% Change</u>			
1960-1982			
Total	+22.5	+53.2	+14.6
Black	+80.3	+77.8	+81.1
1970-1982			
Total	+ 3.7	+19.9	- 0.9
Black	+20.5	+30.6	+17.8

Source: Same as Table 1.

In South Jersey the rate of increase for the total population is 20 percent. Since 1970, however, the Black population in New Jersey rose by 21 percent, but in southern New Jersey the rate of increase was 31

percent; the Black population in North Jersey rose by 18 percent.

Regional Stability. Growth in the Black population in South Jersey since 1960 has not altered the regional distribution of Blacks in New Jersey. For example, Table 1 discloses that in 1960 Blacks in South Jersey represented 23 percent of the total number of Blacks. In 1982, Black South Jerseyans continue to comprise 23 percent of the statewide Black population. Probably the brisk growth in the number of Black across the state, coupled with a smaller Black population base in South Jersey than in North Jersey, though the growth rate is higher in South Jersey, accounts for the stability in the regional distribution.

Distribution of Blacks. Currently, Table 3 shows, the highest number of Black South Jerseyans are in Camden, Burlington, Atlantic, and Cumberland counties. 80 percent of Black South Jerseyans reside in these four counties. (In comparison, the estimated population for 1982 discloses that the highest number of whites are in Camden, Ocean, Burlington, and Gloucester counties.)

In 1960 three of the eight southern counties had Black population percentages above 10 percent: Atlantic (18 percent), Salem (15 percent), and Cumberland (12 percent). In 1982, five of the counties have a Black population percentage above 10 percent: Atlantic (18 percent), Salem (15 percent), Cumberland (15 percent), Camden (14 Percent), and Burlington (13 percent).

Black Population Growth Table 4 reveals that Black population growth in South Jersey varies considerably among the eight counties, but Burlington County shows the most growth and Salem County the least. The leading growth counties in growth rates in the Black Population from 1960 to 1982 are: Burlington (227 percent),

TABLE 3

Population Profiles for Eight Counties in South New Jersey
Total White, Total Black, Percent Black; 1960-1980; Est. 1982

County	1960			1970			1980			Est. 1982		
	White	Black	% Black	White	Black	% Black	White	Black	% Black	White	Black	% Black
Atlantic	132,393	28,225	17.5	143,427	30,403	17.4	154,832	34,133	17.6	155,692	34,316	17.6
Burlington	208,940	14,280	6.4	292,461	28,162	8.1	306,987	45,471	12.5	314,972	46,649	12.5
Camden	355,855	35,297	9.0	401,553	52,318	11.5	383,245	67,232	14.3	390,325	68,457	14.3
Cape May	44,571	3,902	8.0	54,565	4,772	8.0	76,138	5,157	6.3	79,593	5,384	6.3
Cumberland	92,824	13,028	12.2	103,348	16,566	13.6	103,712	19,868	15.0	104,977	20,108	15.0
Gloucester	122,391	12,262	9.1	157,542	14,444	8.4	108,281	16,936	8.5	184,217	17,304	8.5
Ocean	104,524	3,351	3.1	201,482	6,261	3.0	331,977	9,439	2.7	344,389	9,765	2.7
Salem	49,785	8,812	15.0	50,965	9,233	15.3	53,989	9,744	15.1	54,589	9,849	15.1
N J	5,539,003	514,875	8.5	6,349,908	770,292	10.7	6,127,467	925,066	12.6	6,194,298	928,315	12.5

Sources: SAME AS TABLE 1

Ocean (191 percent), Camden (94 percent), and Cumberland (54 percent). The Black population increased by at least one-third in all the counties except Atlantic (22 percent) and Salem (12 percent).

TABLE 4

BLACK POPULATION GROWTH TRENDS WITHIN SOUTH JERSEY

<u>Counties</u>	% Change, 1960-1982	% Change, 1970-1982
Atlantic	+ 21.6	+12.9
Burlington	+226.7	+65.6
Camden	+ 93.9	+30.8
Cape May	+ 38.0	+12.8
Cumberland	+ 54.3	+21.4
Gloucester	+ 41.1	+19.8
Ocean	+191.4	+56.0
Salem	+ 11.8	+ 6.7

Source: Same as Table 1.

Burlington, Ocean, Camden, and Cumberland counties also recorded the highest rates in Black population growth since 1970.

Blacks in Towns and Cities. The high rate of Black population growth in Burlington and Ocean counties since 1960 is a reflection of the growing attractiveness of small towns to Black South Jerseyans. For example, in 1960 two-fifths (41 percent) of the region's Blacks lived in two cities--Camden and Atlantic City. The population estimates for 1982 disclose that less than a third (30 percent) of the region's Blacks now reside

in these two cities.

Further, in 1960 over three-fourths of the Blacks in Camden and Atlantic counties resided in the cities of Camden (78 percent) and Atlantic City (76 percent). Although the Black population in Atlantic City declined from 21,555 in 1960 to 18,815 in 1982, the number of Blacks residing in Camden grew from 27,415 to 44,576. Even so, the estimated population figures for 1982 disclose that the proportion of Camden County's Black population living in the City of Camden is down to about two-thirds (65 percent); Black residents of Atlantic City now only represent a little more than half (55 percent) of Atlantic County's Black population.

Among South Jersey's larger urban areas, several of them have high proportions of Blacks. In the City of Camden, 53 percent of the population is Black. The Atlantic County communities of Atlantic City and Pleasantville are both 50 percent Black. (Although the number of Blacks in Atlantic City declined between 1970 and 1980, the Black population in adjoining Pleasantville jumped from 4,626 to 6,712--a 45 percent increase.) The Black share of the population in Bridgeton (Cumberland County) and Willingboro Township (Burlington County) is 35 percent and 38 percent, respectively. Significantly, the number of Blacks in Willingboro rose from 4,738 in 1970 to 15,102 in 1980--a 219 percent jump!

The historical Black residential pattern of residing in small towns continues to be a part of the Black experience in South Jersey. In the nineteenth century Blacks resided in predominantly Black towns such as Goldtown and Springtown in

Cumberland County and Lawnside in Camden County.

Black settlement patterns in South Jersey continue to reflect a relatively large number of small towns with fairly sizable proportions of Blacks. A few examples: Lawnside (99 percent Black) in Camden County has a total population of 3042; Penns Grove (52 percent Black) in Salem County has a total population of 3150; Woodbine (29 percent Black) in Cape May County has a total population of 2809; Fairfield (50 percent Black) in Cumberland County has a total population of 5693; and Paulsboro (26 percent Black) in Gloucester County has a total population of 6944.

Further, many comfortable and growing suburban communities such as Cherry Hill (suburban Camden), Dover Township in Ocean County, Galloway and Hamilton Townships (suburban Atlantic City), and Mount Laurel (suburban Camden) in Burlington County have relatively small, but growing Black populations. For example, from 1970 to 1980 the number of Blacks in Cherry Hill grew by 102 percent; Dover, 33 percent; Galloway, 51 percent; Hamilton, 63 percent; and Mount Laurel, 120 percent. In 1980 the Black proportion of the population in these towns was 2 percent in Cherry Hill; 0.4 percent in Dover Township; 6 percent in Galloway Township, 15 percent in Hamilton Township, and 5 percent in Mount Laurel.

Other small towns, however, have declining Black populations, but a growing general population. The shore community of Ocean City in Cape May County is one example. In Ocean City the number of Blacks dropped from 815 in 1970 to 765

in 1980, but the city's total population jumped 32 percent. Florence Township in Burlington County is another example. Between 1970 and 1980, the number of Blacks in Florence declined from 664 to 638; the general population in Florence Township grew by 6 percent. From 1970 to 1980 the Black proportion of the population in Ocean City dropped from 8 percent to 6 percent; in Florence Township the Black share declined from 8 percent to 7 percent.

Since 1970, the Black population in South Jersey has been growing at a rate higher than the Black population in North Jersey. Although the distribution of the Black population between North and South Jersey has remained fairly stable since 1970, the Black population within South Jersey is shifting. Camden and Atlantic City's share of the regional Black population is less than one-third. Burlington and Ocean counties have the highest growth rates in the Black population since 1960. Some Shore communities (Atlantic City and Ocean City are examples) have declining Black populations and others, such as Willingboro, Cherry Hill, and Hamilton Township have growing numbers of Blacks. On the whole, the number of Blacks in South Jersey is growing.

Income Trends

Income data from the 1980 U.S. Census, the most current available data, reveals that Blacks residing in the southern counties in New Jersey contend with lower economic conditions than Blacks in North Jersey.¹ This conclusion was reached by examining data on family income, household income, family income

below the poverty level, family income by type of family, presence of children, and Black income as a percent of white income.² In addition, an analysis of Black households by type of income--wage or salary, self employment, public assistance--is also presented.

Family Income. The 1980 U.S. Census discloses a lower average (mean) income for Blacks in southern New Jersey than in North Jersey. For example, the average income for South Jersey's 48,456 Black families was \$17,140, but the 168,810 Black families in North Jersey had an average income of \$20,319. The average Black family income ranged from \$21,439 in Burlington County to \$15,176 in Cumberland County. Ocean County's Blacks were near the average for Black South Jersey families with a mean family income of \$17,372.

In addition, the data reveal that 50 percent of South Jersey's Black families had low incomes³ and 8 percent had high incomes. In North Jersey, in comparison, 46 percent can be classified low income and 15 percent as high income.

Households. The average income in South Jersey's 63,923 Black households in 1980 was reported to be \$15,830. Among the 230,591 Black households in northern New Jersey, the average household income was \$18,632. The average household income for Blacks in southern New Jersey ranged from \$20,393 in Burlington County to \$14,253 in Salem County. The mean household income of \$16,604 in Ocean County comes closest to the mean for Black South Jersey households.

In terms of income levels among Black households, in 1980 56 percent of the South Jersey's Black households could be classified as low

income; 7 percent high income. In North Jersey, 48 percent of Black households in 1980 could be classified as low income; 11 percent as high income. (13 percent of South Jersey's Black households could be classified as upper-middle income; 15 percent of their northern counterparts were in this category.)

Families Below the Poverty Level. The 1980 census reports that 21 percent of all Black families in South Jersey were below the poverty level; the comparable figure was 18 percent in the balance of the state. In South Jersey the highest poverty rate among Black families was in Camden County (27 percent) and the lowest rate in Burlington County (11 percent). The poverty rate for Atlantic County (21 percent) was at the regional rate.

Poverty in Black Female-Headed Families. The 1980 census reports that the percentage of southern New Jersey Black families with female heads was lower (36 percent) than in northern New Jersey (40 percent). Within South Jersey, Atlantic and Camden counties had the highest percentage of Black female headed households--44 percent each. Burlington County (22 percent) had the lowest proportion. Salem County was closest to the regional proportion with 37 percent.

Throughout New Jersey poverty levels increase because of the incidence of female-headed households. Southern New Jersey's Black female-headed families, however, are more likely than their northern counterparts to live in poverty. For example, in South Jersey 43 percent of all Black female-headed families were below the poverty level in 1980; in northern New Jersey the percentage

was 39 percent. In the eight southern counties, the highest percentage of female headed households below the poverty level is in Salem County (87 percent)--75 of 86 female headed households. Burlington County has the the lowest proportion (30 percent) and Gloucester County (44 percent) was closest to the regional rate.

According to 1980 census data, 72 percent and 73 percent of all Black families below the poverty level in southern and northern New Jersey, respectively, are headed by females. (Since 1970 Black female-headed families, a major contributor to the increase in poverty among Blacks, have increased by 70 percent statewide.)

Family Income and the Presence of Children. The 1980 census reports the median family income for married Black couples in southern New Jersey to be \$20,056 (half of the couples had lower incomes and half had higher incomes), and for northern New Jerseyans, the median income for families was \$22,738. The median income for Black married couple families in southern New Jersey ranged from \$23,463 in Burlington County to \$18,187 in Cape May County. The median income for Black married couples in Camden County (\$20,036) was closest to the median.

Looking only at the median income for female headed households, with no husband present, the data reveals a dramatic drop in the median income. For example, the median income for female headed households in South Jersey in 1980 was only \$8,032 and \$9,512 for these Black families in North Jersey. The median income for Black female headed households in South Jersey ranges from \$9,763 in Burlington County to \$6,882 in Salem County. The median income for Black female headed families in Gloucester

County (\$8,133) is closest to the median.

Turning to married couples with children under 18 years of age, the census data disclose that in South Jersey the median family income in 1980 for Black families was \$21,011 and \$23,715 for Black families in northern New Jersey. The median income for Black couple families ranged from \$24,197 in Burlington County to \$18,575 in Cape May County. The median income for Black couple families in Ocean County (\$20,974) was closest to the median.

Among female-headed households, with children under 18 but no husband present, for southern and northern New Jersey the median income was \$7,017 and \$8,997, respectively. In South Jersey the highest median income for these families was in Burlington County (\$9,065) and the lowest median income for these female headed families was in Salem County (\$5,780). The median income for these families in Cumberland County (\$7,305) was closest to the regional median for Black female headed families.

Black Family Income as a Percent of White Family Income.

The income data reported in the 1980 census reveals a consistent pattern of lower incomes among Blacks in South Jersey than for them in North Jersey. Interestingly, Blacks in South Jersey fair better than their northern counterparts when Black income is expressed as a percentage of white income. For example, Black family incomes in South Jersey average 74 percent of white family incomes in southern New Jersey. In comparison, Black family

Table 5

Black Income As a % of White Income in South Jersey

	Family Income	Per Capita Income
<u>County</u>		
Atlantic	70.1	62.3
Burlington	81.8	74.9
Camden	62.8	60.0
Cape May	76.5	68.1
Cumberland	71.8	61.5
Gloucester	80.0	79.5
Ocean	81.9	65.4
Salem	70.2	64.4

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, PC80-1-C32 N.J.; and New Jersey State Data Center, New Jersey 1980 Census of Population and Housing Municipal Profiles, Volume V.

income in North Jersey average 71 percent of white incomes in northern New Jersey. Table 5 discloses that the gap between Black and white family incomes is narrower in the growing suburban counties of Ocean, Burlington, and Gloucester.

Black per capita income, in comparison, in South Jersey is on the average 67 percent of white per capita income; in North Jersey Black per capita income is 63 percent of white per capita

income. Although Table 5 also reveals that gaps in per capita income are narrower in Gloucester, Burlington, and Cape May counties, Black and white incomes in Cape May County are among the lowest in South Jersey.

Sources of Income. 80 percent of Black households in southern New Jersey derive their total income from wages or salary and 3.7 percent are self-employed. In northern New Jersey Black households derive 83 percent of their wages from wages and salary and 3.9 percent are self-employed. 21 percent of Black households in South Jersey receive some level of public assistance; in North Jersey 16 percent of Black households receive public assistance.

Economic Conditions. Based on the data at hand, there is an emerging group of Black families in South Jersey with high income levels that are moving toward parity with their white counterparts. These Black families live throughout South Jersey, but they are fairly prevalent in Burlington, Ocean and Gloucester Counties. The gap between Black and white income levels is also fairly close in counties such as Cape May and Salem, but the general income levels for Blacks and whites tend to be lower in those counties than in the rest of South Jersey.

These data also disclose an unavoidable connection between an increase within the Black community of female-headed households and a corresponding reduction of the availability of income. Although Black income levels are consistently lower among Blacks in South Jersey than their counterparts in northern New Jersey, the proportion of Black families headed by females is

slightly higher in North Jersey than in South Jersey. However, the combination of lower income levels in the South than in the North, particularly among Blacks, and the high incidence of female headed households among Blacks, translates into a higher proportion of Black households in South Jersey receiving public assistance than in North Jersey.

To better understand these race-related and regional income differences, data collection and analysis need to be conducted on job movement patterns and economic trends across New Jersey. These studies are especially needed given the general growth in jobs in South Jersey in the 1980s and the evidence showing some Blacks are doing well in a growing regional economy.

Children in Protective Service

Something should also be said about the placement of children under protective service supervision. The growing number of female headed families and the dramatically lower incomes for these families than married couples with children are just two reasons for examining the placement of children in protective service. Furthermore, the generally lower average lower incomes in South Jersey than in northern New Jersey, and the higher use of public assistance among Blacks in the South than in the North suggests some attention be given to the removal of children from their homes. Poverty and the general economic conditions may not produce the most conducive environment for nurturing children in their homes.

For these reasons the placement of children in protective service, especially foster care, across regions and among races

is examined. The need for protective services may be the outgrowth of a parent's inability or unwillingness to provide for the child. The incidence of child abuse, neglect and/or abandonment are reasons for custody of children to be taken away from parents.

In New Jersey the Division of Youth and Family Services (DYFS) in the Human Services Department is mandated to provide protective services for children. If the nature of abuse, neglect or abandonment is classified as critical, the protective service many include foster care or other placement of the child outside of the family. Given the family income trends among Blacks and the importance of family structure, it is wise to review the rate of protective service delivery by DYFS to Black children and the provision of foster care.

Protective Service Supervision. Although Black families in South and North Jersey are more likely to receive protective service supervision from DYFS than white families, Black families in South Jersey receive slightly less intervention by DYFS than Black families in the balance of New Jersey.⁴ For example, 1 percent of all white children and 7 percent of all Black children in New Jersey are under protective service supervision. In South Jersey 7 percent of all Black children are under protective supervision; in North Jersey the proportion is 8 percent. Among whites, 2 percent of all children in South Jersey, and 1 percent of the white children in North Jersey are under protective service supervision.

Among Black children, the percentage of children under protective service supervision ranges from 10 percent in Cape May

County to 3 percent in Burlington County. Salem County (6 percent) is closest to the percent among Black children in South Jersey. Nonetheless, 63 percent of the children under protective service supervision in South Jersey are in Camden and Atlantic Counties.

Foster Care. Protective service many include the placement of children outside the natural family through foster care. Foster care placement reflects the general pattern of protective service supervision.⁵ Statewide, 62 percent of the children in foster care are Black and 26 percent are white children. Black children are 49 percent of the foster care cases in South Jersey; they are 65 percent of the cases in North Jersey. White children are 40 percent of the foster care cases in South Jersey 23 percent of the cases in northern New Jersey.

Notes

1. Data presented were obtained from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, General Social and Economic Characteristics, 1980 Census, PC80-1-C32 N.J.; and from the New Jersey State Data Center, New Jersey 1980 Census of Population and Housing Municipal Profiles Volume V.

2. The 1980 census reports income for the calendar year preceding the census, 1979. The terms household, family and unrelated individual are defined as follows: (1) Household--person or persons occupying a housing unit, such as a house, an apartment, or a group of rooms. In a household one person is designated as the householder. (2) Family--a householder and one or more persons living in the same household and are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. (3) Unrelated Individual--a householder living alone or with non-relatives only, or a household member who is not related to the householder, or a person living in group quarters who is not an inmate of an institution. The relationship between household formation and income is indeed complex. A household, for example, can be made up of two or more families, or a family and an unrelated individual. A shared household could mean shared living expenses, thus increasing the amount of disposable income for persons in the household.

3. Low Income - Under \$15,000
Lower Middle - \$15,000 - \$24,999
Upper Middle - \$25,000 - \$34,999
High Income - \$35,000 and Over

4. New Jersey Department of Human Service, Division of Youth and Family Services, "Children, Active Receiving Services by RACE," April 14, 1986.

5. Idem, "Children in Foster Care by RACE," April 14, 1986.

YVONNE BONITTO-DOGGETT*

Historically, black workers have been a major component of the labor force in Atlantic City and surrounding communities. Atlantic County's economy in the late nineteenth century attracted Blacks to several communities, including Atlantic City, Pleasantville, and Egg Harbor City. The mixed economy of tourism, farming, and manufacturing provided job opportunities, and the emerging resort economy in Atlantic City was the primary magnet. In order to benefit from the area's economy, Blacks had to endure discrimination and segregation, being primarily employed as low-paid service workers in the resort's hotels and restaurants. The struggle by Blacks to cope evolved into a cohesive community and solidified their presence in Atlantic County.

The survival and coping skills of Blacks were tested several times in the twentieth century. First, in the early decades of the century, Black workers had to contend with segregation and job displacement. Next, they had to survive in a community experiencing economic stagnation and decline. Finally, Blacks had to make a place for themselves in the casino economy that emerged in the late 1970s. This paper examines the Black presence in Atlantic County's economy from the formation of a resort economy in Atlantic City in the late nineteenth century to the development of the casino economy of the 1980s.

*The author gratefully acknowledges the research assistance and thoughtful comments of Suzanne Longacre, a member of her staff.

Economic Basis of Black In-Migration

Prior to the 1950s, there were three major waves of Black in-migration into Atlantic County. In each wave Blacks moved into distinct areas of the county. First, over one hundred years ago, Blacks settled into Atlantic City's burgeoning tourism economy. Then in the years following World War I, the first principal national migration of Blacks from the South to the North, southern Blacks began to settle in the communities of Pleasantville, Egg Harbor Township, Elwood, and Egg Harbor City. Finally, in the 1930s, Black urban factory workers were attracted to the small lot real estate development in Atlantic County's Newtonville-Mizpah area.

Atlantic City. Atlantic City was formed as a tourist attraction in the 1850s. Between its founding and the Civil War, the Black population seldom exceeded 200. By the 1870s, Atlantic City was a thriving resort community, and Blacks were recruited in large numbers to work in the city's vibrant economy. Railroad linkages to Philadelphia, New York, and other population centers were the catalyst for investors and developers to build hotels and provide amusements to accommodate and entertain the tourist trade. Jobs were abundant for Blacks in the hotels and recreational facilities. Reflecting on the period, Professor Joseph Messick observes that "in the service-oriented economy of Atlantic City, Blacks...had little difficulty finding the kind of work which custom had restricted them...as well as slavery-based attitudes of whites."¹

Wage rates and the small town way of life in Atlantic City² attracted Blacks from coastal towns in the Southeast. Job opportunities for Blacks in hotel-recreation jobs, domestic work, and other service jobs, along with higher wage rates than in the South, made Atlantic City the desired destination for rural southern Blacks. (Southern Blacks on the farms later found the industrial cities in New Jersey and elsewhere in the North attractive.) Consequently, Black migration into Atlantic City began earnestly before 1910--the beginning of the first major migration of southern Blacks into northern industrial centers.

By the 1920s, Atlantic City had the appearance of a "boom town" for Black workers. Blacks were dominant among hotel workers. The Black population in Atlantic City was 11,069--27 percent of the city's total population. Blacks held 95 percent of the hotel jobs, and two-thirds of all Black male workers were in the hotel-recreation work force. Only one-third of Black female workers were in these jobs; most Black females were³ domestic workers.

Nearby Towns. Between 1910 and 1930, largely in response to the growth of manufacturing jobs in northern urban centers and the corresponding decline of job opportunities for Blacks in the rural South, the first principal national migration of Blacks from the South to the North occurred. At least 1,000,000 Blacks migrated from the Deep South and the Southeast to major northern industrial cities.

Some of the Black migrants in this period were attracted to Atlantic County. Many of the in-migrants found jobs as factory and farm workers in Egg Harbor Township, Elwood, the Farmington

section of Pleasantville, and Egg Harbor City. Egg Harbor City, with a mix of farms and factories, became a rural-urban center. Blacks found work in Egg Harbor City's factories and small businesses. A few Blacks became owners of small farms and businesses. The attractiveness of Pleasantville and Egg Harbor Township for Blacks was responsible for these communities becoming known colloquially as "Little Africa."⁴

Small Lot Developments. In the 1930s, enterprising real estate developers began to market small lots in rural Atlantic County to southern Black migrants in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. The developers believed there was a market for a rural, small-town lifestyle among Black urban dwellers. Atlantic County's location and access by train and the emerging automobile to major urban centers made the area attractive for commuters, retirees, and those homesick for rural surroundings.

Small lot developments took place in Newtonville and Mizpah. Opportunities to live simple, rural life styles encouraged these developments. Many Black workers became commuters; for others, the journey between home and the workplace became too arduous, so, they found jobs in the local area. Many of them satisfied their rural urges by growing crops on their small plots. Though economically depressed, these areas exist today as close-knit Black communities.⁵

Tourism and Blacks: The First 100 Years

Black workers were instrumental in the mid-nineteenth century transition of Absecon Island into "America's Playground."

By 1900, Black workers and the railroad had made the "bathing village" of 1854 an anachronism.

The three principal causes for the rapid growth of Atlantic City from a small "bathing village" in 1854 to "America's Playground" by 1900 were: railroads linking the resort with Philadelphia, New York City and cities of the West; the development of hotels and entertainment facilities to attract tourists; and a hotel-recreation work force which was 95 percent black by that time. Thus black workers were a vital element in the development and success of the resort, and their essential place in its recreational economy gave them a unique urban experience.⁶

Black Worker Dominance. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Atlantic City had become a major resort economy and the smooth operation of the economy depended on Black workers. The importance of Black workers in hotel and recreation jobs in Atlantic City was not matched by Black dominance of factory jobs in industrial centers.

While the main urban centers of the North were being sustained by industry, Atlantic City's lifeblood was tourism and its muscle was the hotel-recreation workforce...By 1912 there were 9 million visitors spending \$120 million, 1000 hotels (including 22 large ones with 500 rooms), and 175 state and national conventions.⁷

The Black work force in Atlantic City operated within a racially segregated society; leading to the emergence of a separate Black society.

Atlantic City's white power structure showed "ambivalence towards blacks through its policy of discrimination and segregation of black tourists on one hand, and tolerance of its black servants on the other. The black servant had to be in the resort, but the tourists did not."⁸

Confronted with racism and discrimination, Blacks turned their second class citizenship into opportunities. Nonetheless, by living in a society apart, Black subordination defined the status of Blacks in Atlantic City.

Discrimination and Segregation. Despite their vital role in the city's tourism economy, Black life in Atlantic City was marked by segregation and discrimination. In the late nineteenth century Blacks were dispersed in clusters throughout the city, but by 1905 a Black ghetto had formed on the North Side. White racism created this "physical ghetto" and the accompanying discrimination. Blacks were discriminated against by the community's institutions and segregated in their use of public accommodations and recreational facilities.

[Blacks] went to the South Side only to work as waiters, waitresses, bellmen, chambermaids, and to perform a variety of other tasks for the convenience and amusement of tourists (whites). They could walk on the Boardwalk and bathe in their restricted section at Missouri Avenue (known as 'Chicken-Bone' Beach), but all other public accommodations and recreational facilities either barred or segregated them. At the end of the workday, they returned to crowded and antiquated housing which bred diseases that shortened their lives, and yet the city made little provision for their care, and when it did, they suffered the indignity of segregation and discrimination.⁹

Community Development. In this sea of racism, some Black progress did occur. Blacks retrenched into their "institutional ghetto" on the North Side; complete with churches, social agencies and other organizations, and recreational facilities that served their needs.

Moreover, Black entrepreneurial and professional endeavors emerged. "As blacks were excluded from the hotels and recreational facilities, except as workers, enterprising black businessmen established numerous places of amusement on the North Side for the entertainment of black residents and tourists."¹⁰

The central role Blacks played in the local economy and their subordinate racial status forced Atlantic City's Blacks to

develop a separate society, complete with Black institutions and organizations. The city's sizable Black labor force contributed to the emergence of a strong Black middle and upper class structure. Indeed, responsibilities and wages for Black workers occupying "high status" hotel and recreation jobs, especially the positions of chef and headwaiter, enabled many Blacks to hold high status in the resort's special recreation economy.¹¹

The exclusion of Blacks from the mainstream created an atmosphere leading to many types of business enterprises owned and operated by Blacks within their own community.

By 1905-1915, blacks were operating boarding houses, restaurants, hotels, groceries, drug stores, cigar stores, saloons, barbershops, catering establishments, beauty salons, funeral homes, real estate offices and other businesses.¹²

Dislocating Black Workers. Although Black entrepreneurship was flourishing, Black workers' dominant position in the city's nineteenth century labor force was challenged by white workers after 1900. The worsening national economy was associated with the influx of whites into the hotel and restaurant service jobs held by Blacks. Eventually, many Black male workers were replaced by white women who were willing to work for lower wages and who created less social friction with tourists. "By 1932, there were only four or five hotels that still employed black waiters."¹³

Ironically, the economic dislocation of Black workers occurred during a strong and vibrant local economy. Prohibition created a boom town. Prostitution and illegal gambling were protected by the white political structure, in particular the political machine of the infamous "Nucky" Johnson. In 1925,

there were 1200 hotels, 99 trains, five piers, 21 theatres, and four thriving newspapers. The national economy hit its bottom in the 1930s, but legal drinking returned, and Atlantic City prospered. However, the position of Blacks in the local work force declined precipitously; the golden years for Black workers vanished.

Atlantic City's Decline

Atlantic City prospered in the Depression years, but investigations into political corruption created bad publicity and a negative image. The New York Sun published an expose' on the "Crime Convention" and political corruption. Audits and other investigations by the Internal Revenue Service dried up the unreported incomes and windfall profits that were rampant. Moreover, by 1941, "Nucky" Johnson, Atlantic City's political boss since 1914, was in jail, and the resort's downward spiral began.

Incipient Decline. Johnson's replacement, State Senator Frank "Hap" Farley, a major booster of Atlantic City's tourism and convention business, pushed plans in the 1940s to construct a major highway, the Garden State Parkway, from North Jersey and the New York area into South Jersey and Atlantic County. Constuction of the parkway took place in the 1950s. Parkway construction was followed by the construction of the Atlantic City Expressway, linking Atlantic City and Philadelphia area, in the 1960s. These highway projects made Atlantic City accessible to the expanding use of motor vehicles and had the potential for

boosting the local economy, but they proved insufficient to stem
Atlantic City's downward spiral.¹⁴

Farley's advocacy of tourism and conventions also lured the 1964 Democratic Party national convention to Atlantic City. His efforts to promote Atlantic City's tourism and convention economy were extensive during his 30 year "reign."

The 1964 Democratic convention was held in Atlantic City only because Farley wanted it there. Among the Jersey politicians he may have been the king of special interest legislation, much of which has been aimed at making Atlantic City a bigger, gaudier, and more successful convention town. It was Hap Farley who...brought about the new addition to the city's mammoth Convention Hall, and who kept Atlantic City free of the state sales tax. Farley was also largely responsible for the construction of the Garden State Parkway, a project he just barely managed to get through Trenton since most knowledgeable people considered it economically unwarranted.¹⁵

Farley's efforts notwithstanding, the unfavorable publicity by national television coverage of the 1964 Democratic convention damaged the resort town's image by highlighting physical and social neglect.

Economic and Social Decline. The national media coverage of the convention also served as a catalyst for local investigative reporting of social ills.

In May of 1965, the Atlantic City Press...ran a six-part story on the terrible condition of the city's poor, stressing the high rates of tubercular and venereal disease among them...the effect of the Press series was a recognition among the black community that the inequities of the Farley machine were a matter of direct concern to them. The black community sought a change in the status quo, which culminated in a referendum drive to change the city's form of government from a commission to a mayoral one. Although the referendum was defeated, the drive forever weakened Farley's grip on the city.¹⁶

Atlantic City was in the midst of decline; the 1964 Democratic convention and the referendum drive focused attention on the

city's economic and social plight and growing Black dissatisfaction with the white political leadership.

By 1970 the resort community's decline was all-encompassing. Minimal employment and population growth was occurring. Atlantic City's population dropped from 59,544 in 1960 to 47,823 in 1970-- a 20 percent decline. Blacks comprised 44 percent of the population. High unemployment and welfare rolls grew; deteriorating facilities and fading attractions did not appeal to tourists. Modern transportation made other locations accessible. Atlantic City's tourism and convention economy was in shambles.

Available hotel rooms declined by nearly 40 percent (with a corresponding drop in lodging industry employment). Levels of real estate and local luxury-tax collection as well as numbers of convention delegates were all receding during this period...From 1965 to 1975, Atlantic City lost 4,500 jobs as its economy contracted on all levels.¹⁷

For Black workers and businesses heavily dependent on the hotel-recreation economy, "the old spa developed a pervasive case of economic malaise."¹⁸ Blacks, who became a major component of the local economy in the 1870s, were among the biggest losers by the 1970s.

Casino Gambling: "New" Economic Opportunities for Blacks?

Casinos had been proposed as a stimulus for the local economy years before its approval in a statewide referendum in 1976. The legalization of casino gambling was expected to supply the boost tourism and the convention business needed. Moreover, by spurring economic development and generating tax revenues, casino gambling was to be an antidote for urban decline in Atlantic City and other depressed cities in the state.

Blacks in the Atlantic City area shared this vision and looked forward to new economic opportunities.

The biggest celebration in Atlantic City since V-J Day erupted when news of the approval of the 1976 casino referendum was announced. Euphoria reigned supreme; the citizens of Atlantic City believed that their city's golden days would now return. The community, which had united (probably for the first and last time) to pass the referendum, viewed gambling as the panacea for all the city's ills.¹⁹

Atlantic City Reemerges as a Destination Area. In 1986, Atlantic City is an economic magnet. Eleven luxurious casino-hotels rise above Atlantic City's waterfront. Two new facilities are currently being constructed. Casinos have created a booming construction industry. More importantly, the casinos attract nearly 30 million visitors a years and at least 40,000 on-going jobs (about 7,000 going to city residents) have been created. In the surrounding areas in Atlantic County non-casino hotels are mushrooming; retail, commercial, and real estate development are booming. Workers throughout South Jersey find jobs in Atlantic City.

Blacks' Initial Experience in the Casino Economy. On the surface, the stimulus appears to be working. But is it working for Blacks? The answer depends on who's responding to the question and which group of Blacks are being discussed.

From the opening days of the casinos, they (blacks) were picketing with signs that read, 'WE WERE USED'. Blacks had been coaxed to vote for the referendum--and were generally credited as being the swing factor--by promises that they would get better jobs. They claimed that they were getting only the menial ones and that what they earned didn't even pay for the higher rents they were being forced to come up with.²⁰

Indeed, at a 1982 conference--"Atlantic City, Tourism & Social Change"--at Stockton State College, an Atlantic City community

leader claimed that "no Blacks, poor whites or Puerto Ricans have benefited--real jobs don't go to poor folks."²¹ Casino representatives at the conference counter-argued that they find it difficult to recruit "qualified" minorities.

The economic decline of Atlantic City over the decades meant the city was plagued by structural unemployment and marginal workers. For these reasons, the first casino to open--Resorts in 1978--had a 100 percent turnover in Black employees; an indicator of a revolving-door for many of the early casino workers. Indeed, a specially-appointed Governor's task force outlined various barriers to minority employment, including license requirements, criminal records, hard-core unemployables, and the need for training.

Affirmative Action. Despite this picture of gloom and doom, Table 1 shows that in 1982 there were 7,946 minorities (most of them are Blacks) in casino jobs--28 percent of the total! These were not all "menial" jobs. Minorities filled 18 percent of the positions defined as executive or management, and 15 percent of the minorities employed in the casinos earned in excess of \$25,000 annually.²²

Although minorities continue to be underrepresented in three of nine Equal Employment Opportunity categories and they have reached the 20 percent employment goal in only three of nine designated positions, all of the operating casino-hotels exceed the employment goal for minority dealers. While only three

TABLE 1

MINORITY EMPLOYMENT IN THE ATLANTIC CITY
CASINO INDUSTRY

EMPLOYMENT ON DECEMBER 31	TOTAL WORKFORCE	MINORITY WORKFORCE	% MINORITY EMPLOYMENT
1981	27,842	7,682	28%
1982	28,846	7,946	28%
1983	30,958	8,837	29%
1984	35,356	10,676	30%
1985	38,686	12,434	32%

SOURCE: Casino Control Commission, Division of Affirmative Action and Planning, Minority Employees--Casino-Hotel Industry Affirmative Action Compliance Levels, For Months Ending December 31, 1981 to December 31, 1985.

casinos have achieved compliance in the employment of minority officials and managers, all of the properties currently employ at least 20 percent minorities in the professional category.

Moreover, the overall percentage is steadily increasing. For example, first quarter 1986 figures show 18 percent of the minority casino work force earns over \$25,000. Female minorities, however, earn significantly less than the median annual salary.²³ Whose reality applies? There are several disparate realities at work here. It is accurate to conclude that Blacks are found at nearly all levels of the industry. Black employment in casinos is not limited to city residents; Black workers, not unlike others, commute from other communities in South Jersey to fill casino jobs.

The reason for the strong record of minority hiring, especially the increasing job opportunities for Blacks, is attributed to the casino enabling legislation's and the casinos' firm commitment to affirmative action.

It is striking to see more than token representation of these groups (minorities and women) at the higher levels. As a new industrial entrant, the casino industry is free of historic commitments and therefore is able to provide significant opportunities for those who find it very difficult to break into more established industries.²⁴

The Casino Control Act (N.J.S.A. 5:12-134 and 135) and regulations (N.J.A.C. 19:53-1.1 to 1.8) require casino hotels to reach employment goals of 43 percent for females and 20 percent for minorities. These goals pertain to representation within the general work force and within all levels of the job hierarchy. Stiff reporting requirements to the Casino Control Commission, the state agency regulating casinos, are mandated by law.

These provisions have also had effects on construction jobs and minority businesses. In 1980, Black male workers were nine percent of the construction trade workers; nine percent of them were also in supervisory positions. In the first quarter of 1986, minorities represented 13 percent of the journeyworker weeks reported by the casino hotel construction industry.

Prodded by the Casino Control Commission, a voluntary agreement was signed by the casino properties to award 15 percent of all vendor contracts of goods and services to minority businessmen and women. The Atlantic City Casino Association has developed a Business Access Guide for familiarizing new vendors with the casinos' purchasing process. Increasing the number of minority-owned businesses participating in the purchasing process

is one of the goals of this effort. In the first quarter of 1986, minority firms received over 7.2 million dollars in contract awards--a 131 percent increase from the fourth quarter of 1985.²⁵ Further, since the first casino opened, the number of black tour-bus companies has increased tenfold. In addition, among white owned tour-bus companies, Blacks occupy nearly 8 percent of the supervisory positions. Blacks are 40 percent of the charter bus drivers.²⁶

Opportunities for Black Economic Development. The examination of EEO/Affirmative Action data reported by the casino hotels reveals a pattern. Some casino properties are clearly making a more aggressive effort in attracting, retaining, and promoting minorities than others, particularly in high level positions. Differences are due to commitment to clearly defined upward mobility programs. Moreover, this public information creates opportunities to exert effective pressure in vulnerable areas.

Despite criticism from "local" Blacks that "outsiders" are being brought in to meet affirmative action goals and timetables, the in-migration of middle-class Blacks to the area may result in perceptual changes regarding the historically "appropriate" service role for Blacks, leading to a willingness to provide economic opportunities previously closed to "local" Blacks. The bottom line is that for the first time in Atlantic City's history there is a multitude of middle-income, white collar jobs that Blacks are occupying in sizable numbers.

The expansion of the casino industry creates opportunities for Black advancement to high management and for Black economic development. But the continuing social and economic conditions in Atlantic City are primarily in Black and Hispanic communities. It is incumbent upon Black leadership to address means to empower the poor and minorities economically. The casino economy continues the tradition of generating dependency by the poor upon those of means. The new opportunities for the economic advancement of some Blacks must become the basis for economic development and self-sufficiency across the Black community.

Notes

1. Professor Joseph Messick, Telephone Interview, Atlantic Community College, June 26, 1986.
2. Herbert James Foster, The Urban Experience of Blacks in Atlantic City, New Jersey 1850-1915 (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1981), p. 17.
3. Ibid., p. 17.
4. Interview with Messick.
5. Ibid.
6. Foster, The Urban Experience of Blacks in Atlantic City, p. i.
7. Ibid., p. 16.
8. Ibid., p. 42.
9. Ibid., p. 242.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., p. 21.
12. Ibid., p. 68
13. Ibid., p.42.
14. Charles Yeager, ED.D., in a workshop on "Atlantic County Politics: An Historical Perspective" at the Conference on Atlantic City, Tourism and Social Change, Stockton State College, May 4, 1982.
15. George Sternlieb and James W. Hughes, The Atlantic City Gamble (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 36.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p. 30.
18. Thomas P. Hamer, Ph.D., "The Casino Industry in Atlantic City: What Has it Done for the Local Economy," Business Review Quarterly (Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, January-February 1982), p. 6.
19. Sternlieb and Hughes, The Atlantic City Gamble, p. 79.
20. Gigi Mahon, The Company that Bought the Boardwalk (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 180.

21. Barbara Lampen, in a workshop on "Government Regulation of the Casino Industry" at the Conference on Atlantic City, Tourism and Social Change, Stockton State College, May 4, 1982.
22. Ibid.
23. New Jersey Casino Control Commission, Report on Affirmative Action Compliance in the Casino Hotel Industry, First Quarter--1986 (Atlantic City), Table 8, pp. 17-19.
24. Sternlieb and Hughes, The Atlantic City Gamble, p. 87.
25. New Jersey Casino Control Commission, Report of Affirmative Action Compliance in the Casino Hotel Industry, Fourth Quarter--1985, (Atlantic City) Table 41, pp. 61-63; and First Quarter--1986, (Atlantic City) Table 40, pp. 60-61.
26. Frank Gallagher, President of Atlantic City Bus Owners and Operators Association, Telephone Interview, Atlantic City, August 1, 1986.

ORGANIZATIONAL LIFE AMONG BLACKS IN BURLINGTON COUNTY

Patricia Reid-Bookhart

As noted by Clement Price, the Black presence in New Jersey generally, and in South Jersey, is well documented.¹ First as slaves and then as free men and women, Blacks settled on Burlington Island as early as 1664.² Early census data (1738) indicate that Blacks comprised 10 percent of New Jersey's population, almost all of whom were enslaved.³ The Quaker influence, manumission and antislavery societies led to the passage of the Manumission Act in 1786 and the effective eradication of slavery in 1804.⁴

Manumission and the inherent drive toward freedom led to a flourishing independent Black community in South Jersey; and eventually, the emergence of Black "self help" organizations. Historically, Black organizations have been created for a variety of reasons, among them are religious, educational, economic, social, and political purposes. Self help organizations are structured to improve the overall quality of Black life.

Black organizations in Burlington County provide an excellent setting for examining the emergence of Black organizations. The study explores the efforts of historical and contemporary Black organizations to uplift the race by serving the community. Throughout the chapter, Black organizational life

is defined as those activities associated with the establishment and implementation of the goals and purposes of self-defined formal Black organizations.

Why Burlington County?

An examination of Black organizational life in South Jersey is no easy task. Unlike highly urban North Jersey, southern New Jersey exhibits unique, "rural-like characteristics" with only a few major cities with populations of more than 50,000. Although an examination of organizations throughout South Jersey would give us a comprehensive study, a case study permits an investigation of Black organizations in a county with a rich Black heritage and a growing Black population.

A fair amount of clustering is noticeable in the distribution of Blacks in southern New Jersey. Blacks in Camden, Cumberland, Ocean, and Atlantic counties are concentrated in a few localities, but in Burlington County they are more dispersed.

The proportion of Blacks residents in urban and communities, jurisdictions experiencing common economic and social problems, is a good indicator. For example, 84 percent of the Blacks in Camden County reside in the urban and localities of Camden, Gloucester Township, Lindenwold, Pennsauken, and Winslow. Nearly two-thirds of Cumberland County's Blacks reside in the cities of Bridgeton, Millville, and Vineland. In Ocean County 57 percent of the Blacks live in Lakewood; in Atlantic County 59 percent of the Blacks reside in Atlantic City (79 percent reside in Atlantic City and Pleasantville).

Burlington County reflects the small town lifestyle of South Jersey. In Burlington, for example, only 38 percent of the Blacks live in the urban aid communities of Pemberton Township and Willingboro. Further, the county's 1980 total of 45,471 Blacks (12.5 percent of the total county population) is fairly distributed among the localities of Willingboro, Edgewater Park, Pemberton, Burlington City, Mt. Holly, and Brown Mills.⁵ The small town character of Black settlement in Burlington provides an opportunity to study the emergence and possible impact of organizational life among Blacks in a relatively dispersed setting.

Historical Antecedents

The formalization of special interest groups into organized clubs and societies marks a significant point in the development of a community. Organizations are formed to promote special interests, solidify common bonds, provide direction to members and the broader community, and unify and strengthen their membership base.⁶ Organizations have served as extended families, linking individuals through fellowship and participation. Organizations are particularly important to those who feel a common bond of oppression, creating an arena where victims can share their struggle and plan for their liberation.⁷

American history is replete with evidence of an oppressive social system geared specifically toward limiting Black access to social, economic, and political opportunities.⁸ Racism, segregation, and discrimination have been effective tools of oppression--forcing Blacks to develop their own separate society

and adjust to the "two-ness" so aptly described by W.E.B. DuBois. A byproduct of a racist and separate society is the emergence of a number of social, economic, religious, professional, and civic organizations to fulfill important community and service needs in the Black community.

Burlington County reflects the pattern. Religious life and institutions are the core of Black organizational life. Historically, churches and religious societies were the first formal organizations in the Black community--slave or free.¹⁰ In Burlington County the Black independent church movement, which was initiated around 1813, was the first of these organizational efforts. The movement led to the appearance of a Black Church in every free community.¹¹ In addition to worship services, the church offered educational, social, and community support. The Black Church movement was led by the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) movement which originated in nearby Philadelphia. The A.M.E. movement proliferated, with nearly 25 churches established in the county by 1900.¹²

This importance of the church has not diminished. Currently, there are more than 50 Black churches in the county. They continue to offer worship, educational, social, and other community support services. Indeed, over the last 175 years, the Black Church has played a leading roll in fostering organizational life in Burlington County's Black community.

A separate and distinct secular organizational life also formed among the county's black community of the mid-1800s. The "African United Temperance Beneficial Society of the Borough of Bordentown" was officially incorporated on January 15, 1840.

According to Lyght:

The group was formed for benevolent and charitable purposes: for the relief or support of such of the members as shall by sickness or other causes be rendered incapable of attending to their usual occupation or calling; care of deceased members.¹³

In 1856, a similar group was organized at Timbucktoo, a Black Camp meeting settlement. The organization was known as "The Sons and Daughters of Timbucktoo."¹⁴ The first African-American Masonry organization also formed during this time. The Unity Lodge at Burlington had been established in 1847.¹⁵ To be sure, the roots of Black organizational life were planted and, like the Black Church movement, continued to flourish into the twentieth century.

Contemporary Black Organizations

A survey of Black leadership, newspapers, and other published documents reveals the existence of more than forty active Black and/or predominantly Black organizations, excluding religious and church organizations, in Burlington County today. These organizations run the gamut, representing civic, social, professional, educational, cultural, human rights, youth, fraternal, sororal, and other interests. With few exceptions, these organizations were formed since 1960. Most of the contemporary organizations are less than 20 years old; their emergence is linked to the modern Civil Rights and Black Power movements.

The county's Black population increased by 38 percent from 1970 to 1980 (the general county population rose by less than 11 percent)¹⁶ and accounts for much of the increase in the number

and type of Black organizations in the county. Although Black population growth is associated with the expansion of Black organizations, factors other than population growth are at work. Population growth, for example, can not explain the Black community's interest and participation in organizations.

Internal and external factors are operative. According to Yearwood: "Conditions external to the black organizations contribute to what goes on within these organizations, the form that they take, and the consequences of their actions."¹⁷ External conditions include the socioeconomic-political environment, relations between the community and the organizations, and interorganizational relations. Internal factors consist of the quality, commitment, and effectiveness of organizational members and leaders.

Vertical Affiliated Organizations

Organizational growth is also associated with the vertical affiliations of many organizations. That is, local organizations may hold membership in regional and national parent organizations. The linkage between local chapters of the NAACP and the statewide and national NAACP organizations are examples of vertically affiliated organizations. The emergence of vertically affiliated organizations in a community can be attributed to an expression of interest by individuals in the local community in the goals of the national body as well as the relocation of previously affiliated members into a new community. Both of these factors are the impetus for organizing new chapters of state and national organizations in Burlington County.

National Affiliates. A number of Black groups in Burlington County are affiliated with national (and in some cases, state and regional) organizations. The groups include Greek and fraternal, youth, social, professional, and political organizations. For example, there are graduate chapters of Omega Psi Phi, Alpha Phi Alpha, and Kappa Alpha Psi fraternities. Chartered graduate chapters of sororities include Delta Sigma Theta, Alpha Kappa Alpha, Eta Phi Beta, and Zeta Phi Beta. Local chapters of Jack and Jill of America, Twigs, Links, Prince Hall Masons, and the Order of Eastern Star are also in the county.

Local affiliates of several professional and political women's organizations are also in the county. Among them are the National Black Nursing Association (Concerned Black Nurses), National Political Congress of Black Women, National Association of University Women, National Association of Black Social Workers, and National Council of Negro Business and Professional Women's Clubs.

County residence is the primary basis for membership in these local affiliates. However, participation of individuals from surrounding counties is encouraged if there is no local affiliate in a neighboring county. The size of membership in the organizations varies from 10 to 100 individuals. Generally, there is only one chapter of a national organization in the county, but some organizations have local affiliates in several communities. For example, the Prince Hall Masons have local chapters in Willingboro, Bordentown, and Riverside.

Unlike organizations that are purely local, nationally affiliated groups are guided by directives and mandates from their respective national offices. The local chapter must conform to national membership standards, program goals, and objectives. Furthermore, local chapters are expected to participate in special initiatives organized by the national organization. Local chapters must remain in good financial standing with the national office if they are to retain their local charters. Essentially, local affiliates are expected to implement the national organization's programs in the local community.

The purposes, goals, and objectives of the local affiliates vary, but a "common thread" does exist. Some of them are political organizations, while others focus on professional development. For others, strengthening fellowship among members is the main goal. All of the affiliates of national organizations have a mission of providing some form of service to the community. For many of them, community service is the primary objective. Given the relationship with the national organization, many local chapters' community service objectives are established on the national level and reflect issues of concern in the national Black community. For example, Delta Sigma Theta's national drive to aid single female heads of households is being implemented in Burlington County through the local chapter's program for unwed teenage mothers. The local chapter is assisted by their own "Delta Teens," a youth service group of young girls between the ages of 15 and 18.

Several other local chapters are implementing programs in the county. The local chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers recently implemented a voter awareness and advocacy program. Further, an African Peoples Relief Fund drive was directed by the national office. The Concerned Black Nurses have begun a program to screen community members for hypertension--the number one killer of Black Americans. The Concerned Black Nurses plan to establish a hypertension screening program in every local Black church. Parishioners would have their blood pressure rates checked following morning worship services. The local affiliate of the National Association of University Women is one of several organizations promoting educational achievement and excellence through the creation and distribution of scholarships.

The behavior of Black organizations, however, reveals a great deal of creativity and flexibility in the way local affiliates develop and implement programs while, simultaneously, staying in good standing with their national organizations. In Burlington County, community service projects include tutorial programs, historical and cultural programming, charitable contributions, educational programs, volunteer, social and human service supports. To be sure, as these organizations meet their community service mandates, on their own they provide an additional layer of support and assistance to the Black community.

Unfortunately, community service activities are not usually understood by the general public, nor do they enjoy high visibility among all organizational leaders. For example, a

survey of Black leadership by this author in Burlington County revealed that most of leaders in local affiliates were generally unaware of the existence of many of the other organizations and their community service activities. (This was also found to be true for state and local groups. Leaders of Greek organizations were the exception; they were generally knowledgeable about other Black Greek organizations.) In addition, the author's search of the county's major newspaper archives, The Burlington County Times (a primary source of information for this study), revealed little media coverage of the community service projects of these organizations.

The lack of media attention to Black issues and service projects may, in part, be attributed to racism and discrimination inherent in media coverage of the Black community. More is at play here, however. Many of the community service efforts appear to be newly initiated, underdeveloped, underutilized, and impacting on a very limited number of Blacks.

Further, many of the organizations are known, primarily, for their "fundraising" events: the Saturday night dances, discos, fashion shows, and luncheons. Clearly, the lack of financial resources is an endemic problem for Black organizations. However, the community's perception that an organization's primary activity is "fundraising" may be a major obstacle in the organization's efforts to project an image which includes "service to the community." The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is an exception to this perception.

National Affiliates: The NAACP As a Case in Point. For many years the NAACP was the only civil rights organization of national prominence in Burlington County. There were no local chapters of the National Urban League, Congress on Racial Equality (CORE), Black United Front, and other similar organizations. The NAACP, whose membership historically has been open to Blacks and whites, had a majority Black membership--a reflection of the national membership pattern. Until recently, the NAACP was in the forefront of organizations focusing on issues in the Black community.

The NAACP's presence in Burlington County can be marked from the 1950s. Three chapters have been organized and maintained over the years. The North Burlington County Branch became the first local chapter. In 1965 the South Burlington County Branch was organized; the Willingboro chapter was formed in 1981.¹⁸

The NAACP's local chapters have had two advantages. First, the organization had a fine national reputation in civil rights. The organization's national reputation attracted an abundance of media coverage, making the public aware of its efforts. Second, local chapters receive part of their financial resources from the national office.

Until recent years, local chapters of the NAACP were widely recognized as Black advocacy organizations. Their history in Burlington County is well documented in local newspaper archives. In the towns of Edgewater Park, Cinnaminson, Riverside, Moorestown, Mount Holly, Burlington City, Pemberton, and Willingboro, the NAACP was once omnipresent. The local chapter, the South Burlington Branch, led rallies and boycotts in the

1960s protesting discrimination in housing and employment. South Burlington also questioned police tactics in the Black community; demanded Black appointments to local governing boards, and challenged the exclusionary political process.

In addition to advocacy and political involvement, the NAACP launched programs for youth and teens; honored contributions by other community residents; and joined forces with other activist organizations when necessary. For example, the New Jersey Supreme Court's landmark Mount Laurel decisions on exclusionary zoning practices emanates from lawsuits filed in 1972 by the Southern Burlington and Camden County Chapters of the NAACP, along with the Camden County Chapter of CORE and several local residents.¹⁹

During the 1950s and 1960s, the NAACP's membership indicated that it was able to follow national mandates while creatively tackling issues of concern in the local community. And the Black community was responsive. In the 1950s, the organization's membership was unquestionably the highest of any Black organization. The NAACP's activist community role peaked in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Its public appeal diminished in the 1980s.

Evidence of dwindling Black support is reflected in aggressive membership drives and the lowering of new membership goals in successive drives. For example, in 1970, the NAACP made an appeal for 2000 new members. Five years later, the call was reduced to 1000; and in 1980 the membership goal was reduced to 500.²⁰ (From 1970 to 1980, the number of Blacks in Burlington

County rose by 62 percent.) Local membership meetings, even in the newly formed Willingboro Chapter, are sparsely attended, averaging only 10 to 12 persons. Moreover, many Blacks question the future role of the NAACP, while others continue to focus on past achievements.

A survey of local newspapers articles, reveals that the NAACP's membership decline can be attributed to internal organizational conflicts and shifts in attitudes in the general population. Newspaper accounts disclose leadership disputes, fractionalism, and other instances of internal strife. In addition, the general conservative shift in the socio-political climate in the general population is associated with a decreased emphasis on the importance of civil rights activism. As one local newspaper observed, the NAACP now engages in a "quiet fight" for equality.²¹

Recent issues and areas of concern for the NAACP notwithstanding, it must be re-emphasized that over the last several decades, the local chapters of the NAACP in Burlington County successfully fought for the uplift of the race. Local branches helped to focus the county's attention on race-related concerns and raised the public's consciousness about civil rights issues.

Statewide Efforts. In 1983, the New Jersey Black Issues Convention (BIC) launched the first multi-purpose, multi-organizational statewide gathering for and about Black people in the twentieth century. With co-sponsorship by more than 50 statewide Black organizations, BIC was an assembly of the diverse

organizations and interests in New Jersey's Black community. The convention permitted an interface between professional, religious and community leaders, politicians, businessmen and women, and other concerned citizens. Held in Franklin Township (Somerset County), the convention attracted more than 1200 delegates and representatives.²² Several national Black leaders spoke to the conferees, including Congressman Walter Fauntroy.

Congressman Fauntroy delivered a convention address on The Black Leadership Family Plan, especially its emphasis on creating organizational structures to link issues of local importance to state government in New Jersey and the national government. Following the convention, representatives from each county in New Jersey were directed to organize county caucuses under the BIC rubric and in keeping with The Black Leadership Family Plan, insuring on-going interaction among Black organizations throughout the year.

BIC has met annually since 1983. Unfortunately, efforts to organize a county caucus in Burlington County have not been realized. Neither local Black leaders nor other Black residents have responded fully to the Congressman Fauntroy and BIC's organizational call. Organizationally, BIC's presence in Burlington County is negligible; though members of existing organizations attend BIC's annual meetings regularly.

Local Organizations

A number of Burlington County's Black organizations are totally independent of national and state organizations. These organizations are formed strictly for local purposes and goals.

They include civic, professional, social, cultural, political, artistic, and special interest organizations. Examples of these organizations include the Mount Holly Art and Social Club, Dreams Inc., Kings and Queens Bowling League, Pentacles, Black Cultural Awareness Group, Ebony Singles, Lei Zodiac, Afro-One Dance, Drama and Drum Theatre, Burlington County Black Caucus, Kinsmen, Willingboro Black Business and Professional Association, Oliver Cromwell Society, and several "Black Caucuses" within predominantly white organizations.

Circumstances in the local Black community define these organizations' activities. Their community service projects, if any, focus on the needs of the immediate community, with less attention given to national or state issues. Their contributions to the community differ from national and state affiliates in their focus of activity, rather than in the intensity of their local efforts. The focus of these organizations is narrow. The Kinsmen is a good example of how these organizations function.

Kinsmen. The Kinsmen of Willingboro is widely credited with being the oldest Black civic group in Burlington County. Founded in 1960, the Kinsmen are a group of Black business and professional men devoted to promoting the general welfare of the entire community. They seek to:

promote high standards of citizenship within the community...encourage members to assume roles of leadership...promote welfare of children, youth and adults in relation to the community with particular respect to the cultural, social, educational and political aspects of the community.²³

The Kinsmen's desire to demonstrate "good citizenship" stemmed, in part, from the social turmoil surrounding the entrance of the

first Black families into the Willingboro (then named Levittown)
24
community.

The Kinsmen were formed to uplift the race and promote issues of importance to the county's general population. For example, they established a scholarship fund to aid needy and deserving students, Black and white. In 1968, the Kinsmen proposed the development of a "Marshall Plan" to promote racial understanding in the community. The organization raised funds to serve the community's needy and co-sponsored seminars with the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith to promote brotherhood. The group's proposal for the establishment of a county college to meet higher education needs eventually led to the opening of Burlington County College. Outstanding citizens, regardless of race, were frequently honored by the Kinsmen.

The Kinsmen have also raised concerns about issues of special interests to the Black community and supported related projects. For example, the Kinsmen and the NAACP jointly mounted opposition to the Willingboro Police Department's "Riot Curb Plans" in 1969. The organization appealed to the state to honor Dr. Charles Drew, the Black physician who discovered blood plasma, with a special day. In 1978, the Kinsmen sponsored the local "Miss Black America Pageant" and the winner, Miss Lydia Jackson, later won that year's national title.
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Unfortunately, the Kinsmen's activities peaked a number of years ago, and the organization is now in a state of decline. Although the group continues to be active, there is a noticeable retrenchment in the number of community service projects. For example, scholarship awards are limited to one student per year.

In addition, the Kinsmen are no longer in the forefront of efforts to promote good citizenship. According to the current president, past internal difficulties have contributed to the group's decline. The Kinsmen and the NAACP have been affected by changing attitudes about integration. Concern about discrimination may still exist, but the social stress related to the integration of a previously all-white community no longer exists.

Organization Decline and Goal Displacement

The goals and purposes that led to the formation of an organization may no longer exist. Many local organizational efforts in Burlington County are tied to specific conditions or problems. When conditions change, so does the organization. Some organization are able to survive by shifting their goals and purposes as change occurs, but others are incapable of maintaining themselves. For these reasons, the tenure of some organizations is short. They outlive their usefulness either because they have been successful in goal attainment or the reasons that motivated individuals to form the organization no longer exists.

The decline of the importance of a particular community concern may lead to goal displacement, and finally to an active organization becoming inactive. For example, the African-American Mothers of Willingboro, an organized response to the Atlanta Child Crises in 1981, no longer exists. The end of the crisis displaced the group's reason for forming. Similarly, the

Concerned Black Parents of Willingboro, a group concerned with the intense racial climate associated with Black children entering previously all white public schools, has become inactive. Several other organizations, among them the Omega Wives, Professional Racial Equality Support Services, Black political Action Committee, and the Haitian-American Association²⁶ are no longer supported.

The narrow focus of these organization may be largely responsible for their inactiveness. That is, narrowly focused local organizations may be more susceptible to becoming inactive than local affiliates of national and statewide organizations. The survival rate among national and state affiliates is higher than for local organizations, regardless of environmental changes. Local chapters of national and statewide organizations are more successful in redefining their goals and purposes. Support and resources from national and state offices to local affiliates for involvement in broader community and societal issues contributes to their high survival rate.

Interorganizational Cooperation

Initial efforts to organize a coalition of Black organizations began in 1971. An umbrella organization was formed by several organizations: Concerned Citizens, Burlington Community Action Program, Mercer-Burlington County Affirmative Action Coalition, and the local NAACP's. The mission of the coalition was to "combine resources and efforts in order to bring about equality in all fields so adequately provided in the Constitution."²⁷ The coalition effort of 1971 failed, but the

seeds for Black coalition-building were sown.

Beginning in the 1980s a plethora of activity emerged around fostering interorganizational relations. The Burlington County Black Clergy Association, an interdenominational group of religious leaders, was organized in 1983. Later, in 1985, the Burlington County Black Panhellenic Council, an organization of the leadership of fraternities and sororities, was established to formalize lines of communication among all Black Greek organizations.

Perhaps the most ambitious endeavor was undertaken in the fall of 1985. The National Association of Black Social Workers, South Jersey Chapter, and Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Nu Nu Chapter, joined forces and issued a call for a countywide Black Leadership Forum. The Forum, which held its first general meeting in February 1986, brought together leaders from approximately 40 Black organizations. The Forum led to the formation of the Burlington County Interorganizational Black Leadership Council. The Council's mission is to "work collectively to establish a common agenda for action in the Black Community."²⁸ Although the Council is in its embryonic stage, its formation is an indication that local organizations are maturing beyond their own special interests and articulating a vision for collective growth and action.

Conclusion

Black organizational life in Burlington County has stabilized. One indicator is the success a number of organizations has had in maintaining themselves over the years.

Another indicator of stability is the various types of on-going community projects undertaken. Further, the emerging trend toward interorganizational networking suggests that Black organizations are beginning to combine resources, if it is mutually beneficial, to provide additional support and service to the community. Organizational cooperation increases the likelihood that special projects can be structured to enhance positive impacts in the Black community.

Based on the results of this study, it appears that notwithstanding recent movements toward interorganizational cooperation, many groups continue to organize and create a high level of activism in their initial years, which, subsequently, is followed by a period of decline and inactivity. This is not unique to Burlington County. New groups have the capacity to generate excitement and, oftentimes, attract new members. But organizational survival may become problematic.

The decline in activism in some organizations is not necessarily negative. It is possible that those organizations that survive are strengthened over time and taper activist efforts, thereby improving the "quality" of service to their members and the general Black community.

As the number of Black organizations in Burlington County increases, community residents have a wider range of organizations for participation. The proliferation of organizations increases organization choice, but some questions remain unanswered. What has been the impact of organizational decline and the continuous creation of new organizations on membership participation and organizational activism? How has

the Black community benefited? Continuing to analyze organizational life among Blacks in Burlington County will provide answers to these questions.

Finally, Black organizations in Burlington County fulfill an important need in the community. By providing social, political, cultural, educational, and human service activities, Black organizations create a supportive social environment and reinforce the strengths and positive values of the Black experience. If this environment can be sustained over time, it serves as a powerful defense for the Black community.

1. Clement A. Price, Freedom Not Far Distant (Newark: N.J.: New Jersey Historical Commission, 1980) and Idem, "We Knew Our Place, We Knew Our Way: Lessons from the Black Past of Southern New Jersey" in this report.
2. Ernest Lyght, Path of Freedom: The Black Presence in New Jersey's Burlington County, 1659-1900 (Cherry Hill, N.J.: F&E Publishing House, 1978), p. 1.
3. Ibid., p. 4.
4. John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans, 5th ed. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), p. 93.
5. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1980).
6. Lennox Yearwood, Black Organizations: Issues on Survival Techniques (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1980), pp. xi-xx.
7. Ibid.
8. Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom.
9. W.E.B. DuBois, Souls of Black Folk (New York: New American Library, 1969)
10. Lyght, Path of Freedom.
11. Ibid., p. 80.
12. Ibid., p. Chapter 6.
13. Ibid., p. 80.
14. Ibid., p. 81.
15. Ibid., p. 88.
16. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population.
17. Burlington County Times, 1959-1986.
18. The Fair Housing Act of 1985 is the New Jersey State Legislature's response to the state Supreme Court's 1983 Mount Laurel decision, the court's second decision on the fair housing issue, ordering municipalities to provide their "fair share" of the regional need for low- and moderate-income housing. The law establishes a nine-member Council on Affordable Housing within the Department of Community Affairs to implement its provisions.

19. Burlington County Times.
20. Burlington County Times, October 2, 1980.
21. New Jersey Black Issues Convention, Update, Newark, 1983-1986.
22. Yearwood, Black Organizations, p. xii.
23. Burlington County Times, February 4, 1970.
24. Trenton Times, "Sunday Times Advertiser", November 28, 1965.
25. Burlington County Times, 1978.
26. Ibid., 1960-1986.
27. Ibid., December 10, 1971.
28. Philadelphia Inquirer, "Neighbors," June 4, 1986, p. 9-BR.

A COMMUNITY REMEMBERS*

Regina Waynes Joseph

Often, in the fevered discussions of a political debate or, in this instance, a landmark legal decision, the people around whom the debate or decision is centered can get lost in the process. The story of Mount Laurel II [Editor's note: The New Jersey Supreme Court's 1983 decision tightening the enforcement of its 1975 ruling that exclusionary zoning is unconstitutional.] is more than the story of a landmark legal decision; it is also the story of black communities in Burlington County, New Jersey that are little known, rarely discussed and that have a long history of residency there. Recounted here are some reminiscences of people who live in two towns--Moorestown and Mount Laurel--their views of the black community in these towns and how they came to be there. There has been no attempt to select a scientific sample or cross section of individuals but an effort has been made to present a balanced view. First, some history.

MOORESTOWN

According to a publication of the Historical Society of Moorestown, "Moorestown did not start to develop as a village

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much before 1700..." and "(1)ts growth during the first one hundred years was exceedingly slow."¹ Then, as now, it appeared to be a very gracious community known for its stately homes and wide, tree lined streets. A quiet town, Moorestown has never been an industrial center but rather "a town of homes."²

During the 1700's, it is evident that, though a predominantly Quaker community, the holding of slaves was not uncommon in Moorestown.³ However, the institution of slavery was not a comfortable fact for this community. In fact, John Woolman, a Quaker and tailor from Mount Holly, who Dr. Clement A. Price characterizes as "...an apostle of racial justice at a time when most whites were different to the idea..."⁴ was felt to be a regular preacher at the Moorestown Friends Meeting House. Thus, as with most black communities in the United States, the black community in Moorestown had its roots in slavery.

Slavery in New Jersey was abolished by the legislature in 1846. Dr. Ernest Lyght further notes:

For all practical purposes slavery in Burlington County was almost extinct by 1840, for the census of that year registered one "negress" held at Chesterfield. Slavery never gained a sound footing in Burlington County. In addition to the Quaker presence, the soil did not lend itself to slave labor in that it was not as profitable as in other areas of the State.⁵

One prominent white resident of Moorestown commenting on the history of the black community there noted that "...the white community was very wealthy and most had house servants...they built homes for their servants in Moorestown..." A resident of Mount Laurel concurred stating that "...around those times, blacks mainly worked in the homes, as household workers, or on the farms in the area...."

As has often been the case, the black church is known for shedding light on history. In this instance, records show the founding of two black churches in Moorestown in the late nineteenth century--the Bethel A.M.E. Church in 1879 and the Second Baptist Church in 1897. Both were founded with the support of local white citizenry. An interesting footnote is mentioned about the founders of the Bethel A.M.E. Church by Dr. Lyght, "The pioneers had previously been members of Jacob's Chapel A.M.E. in Mount Laurel, but they began to grow weary of the long, round trip walk each Sunday."⁶ Moorestown and Her Neighbors, first published in 1929, records the membership of the Bethel A.M.E. Church at the time as 223 and that of the Second Baptist Church as 240.⁷

In the present day, blacks are dispersed throughout the town though as Congressman Edwin B. Forsythe (R-6th District) [Editor's note: Congressman Forsythe died shortly after Joseph's 1983 interview.] admits "...primarily in two concentrations." The two concentrations to which he refers are both north of the railroad which divides the town into two major sections. One concentration is on Beech Street which is located on the east side of the center of Moorestown. It is here that the Second Baptist Church, referenced earlier, is found. The majority of Moorestown's poor black community lives on Beech Street. Up until the last few years, most of the homes in this area were dilapidated shacks, "...a blight on the community" noted Forsythe. Several years ago, a community coalition of churches finally took responsibility for rehabilitating this area, formed

the Moorestown Ecumenical Neighborhood Development Corporation, gutted Beech Street, replacing there decent, safe and sanitary housing.

The second concentration of the black community is on the west side of the center of town bordered primarily by the railroad to the north. Most of Moorestown's middle income blacks reside on these streets. One major development, Farmdale Road, which is said to have increased the number of middle class blacks moving to Moorestown and encouraged future such developments, had a curious beginning. The story was first mentioned to me by my father, William D. Waynes, a resident of Farmdale Road since 1964. He stated that the Farmdale Road development was built by Blase A. Ravikio, a prominent white builder/developer in Moorestown, at the behest of RCA for their black engineering talent who could not buy homes in comfortable communities in the area. At that time, my father continued, blacks could not purchase homes anywhere in Moorestown because of the housing discrimination which existed. In fact, he said, restrictive covenants denying purchase of homes to blacks and Jews were still to be found at that time in many deeds in this and other surrounding communities.

A talk with Blase A. Ravikio elaborated on the story my father had shared with me. Ravikio recalled that in late 1958 (he was uncertain of the exact date), he received a call from a personnel manager with the Radio Corporation of America (RCA). RCA had a major facility in Moorestown and had many defense contracts. The personnel manager told him that he had a number of black engineers on staff that he was losing because they could

find no housing in the area. Ravikio was asked to help. Ravikio stated that he did not know how he could assist but that he would attend a meeting with the 18 black engineers at the Camden YMCA. After that meeting, Ravikio recalled, he was determined to build homes for these men and their families. The engineers had shared with him the blighted, impoverished conditions in which they lived in Philadelphia, Camden and other communities in South Jersey to which blacks were directed to live. Ravikio preceded to look for a municipality in which he could build the proposed homes. He approached several municipalities in Burlington County and all refused for various reasons, not the least of which being that the homes to be built were intended for black families. He thought that the project would be impossible to complete but one day discussed the problem with then Moorestown Mayor Edwin B. Forsythe. Ravikio recalled that Forsythe said why not Moorestown? Ravikio indicated that he had not thought of Moorestown before because he felt that housing would have been too expensive to build there and thus, more than the black engineers could afford. But Forsythe told him that the town owned a tract of land on North Church Street that could be sold for the project. Ravikio purchased that land and assembled additional parcels adjacent to it and planned to build 18-21 homes. Prior to municipal approval, a public hearing of the Planning Board was held before which the 18 men appeared. The project was approved and the Farmdale Road development built. Blacks started moving into the development in 1959.

W. Edward Armstead, a resident of Farmdale Road, upon hearing the Ravikio story, said, "I was one of the 18." Armstead added to the story. He said in 1958 or 1959 he received a call from Taber Bolden, a black personnel manager in RCA's Camden facility. He was told of the planned project for Moorestown and was invited to meet with Ravikio in Camden. Armstead said that he went only because he did not want to break the unity of the group but actually had no intention of buying a new home since he had just purchased a home in Lawnside, New Jersey, six months earlier. He recalled that the plans preceded well and finally reached the point when the 18 men were to draw numbers to determine in what order lots would be selected. Armstead drew his number which turned out to be number one. He had the first choice. He and his wife, Shirley, decided to move to Moorestown and moved there in March of 1960.

Upon reflecting on his decision some 23 years ago, Armstead said that he was not dissatisfied. He said that some years ago he resented the fact that he could not move anywhere he wanted in Moorestown but the times had changed somewhat. Blacks were, in fact, now dotted throughout the community and the quality of life had been and was rather good for him and his family. He said that he preferred living in the black community and noted that his neighborhood did not experience the crime that the rest of Moorestown was undergoing. This was due, in part, to the fact that, since the neighborhood was all black, it was easier to spot white youngsters who were engaged in petty crime. Armstead said the neighbors could, if this occurred, pick them up and turn them over to their families and/or police. Armstead further commented

that, prior to the Farmdale development, the middle class black community was not large, consisting mainly of some teachers and a few principals. Subsequent to 1960, more middle income blacks bought lots and built their own homes, but still, mainly in this concentration. Armstead commented finally that it was not until "...definitely 1970..." that blacks could move anywhere they chose in Moorestown. W. Edward Armstead is currently [1983] President of the Moorestown Board of Education on which he has served since 1967.

The 1980 census figures show Moorestown's total population as 15,596 with 919 black residents or 5.9 percent of the total population.⁸

MOUNT LAUREL

On March 7, 1872, a new township was "...set off from the township of Evesham in the county of Burlington...to be called the township of Mount Laurel."⁹ But the history of Mount Laurel extends further back than 1872 and much of it tells the story of the presence of a significant black community. That story can best be told by telling the story of one woman, Ethel Lawrence, whose family has lived in Mount Laurel since before the Civil War.

As was noted earlier in the discussion of Moorestown, slavery was not uncommon. This was no less for Mount Laurel.

Mount Laurel: A Centennial History concurs:

The Civil War and the Industrial Revolution played minimal roles in the history of Mount Laurel. Although the Quakers were to profess a religious indignation toward the institution of slavery, some of New Jersey's earliest settlers found they were economically forced to separate

livelihood from morality. (underlining mine) Slaves purchased in Newark, Delaware and Baltimore, Maryland were imported to work as field hands and household servants.¹⁰

Dr. Ernest Lyght compiled a sampling of slave manumissions in Burlington County effected during the period 1786-1800. Of those 24 listed from Deed Book A, 11 slaves were freed in Evesham Township.¹¹ A look at the census data of the mid-nineteenth century further provides a sense of the size of the black community. The census data of 1830 records 46 black households in Evesham Township with a total of 194 persons living in those households. The 1840 census figures report a "total (white and free)" population of 5,060; 355 free and no slaves reported. Census records of 1861 show a total population of 3,144 with 2,861 white and 284 black.¹²

It was around this time, the middle of the nineteenth century, that reference is first made to Ethel Lawrence's family.

It was Petersburg, located between the foot of the Mount and the junction of the Moorestown-Mount Laurel and Union Mill Roads to the south, that was the final destination of Mary Robinson's great grandparents following their escape as slaves from Delaware. And this is where her grandfather, David A. Gaines and her great uncle, George Gaines, were raised.¹³

Mary Robinson, the mother of Ethel Lawrence, still lives in Mount Laurel. The village of Petersburg, mentioned above, was one of several villages which were a part of Evesham Township.

Ethel Lawrence was born in 1926 and raised in Mount Laurel. She recalled her early years there as poor ones during which she attended segregated schools for her elementary education. Upon graduation from eighth grade in 1939, she and the other black youngsters in Mount Laurel attended the same high school as the white students since there were no segregated high schools in the

area.

Mrs. Lawrence described Mount Laurel then as "...all farmland..." with most blacks living there as tenant farmers. She remembered vividly working on the farms as a child along with white farming families. But, she noted, though blacks always knew "their place", they were treated with dignity and respect by the white members of the community. Black and white students played together, her mother, Mrs. Mary Robinson served as Brownie leader of an integrated troop of little girls and all were involved in civic activities.

The "...big change..." in race relations came, according to Mrs. Lawrence, with Ramblewood, a middle income development. This area which previously was a fruit farm now housed mainly white residents, characterized by Mrs. Lawrence as "...transient people...", many of whom worked for RCA, lived there five to six years, with their major concern--"how much can I sell the house for?" From her perspective, these residents "...brought their crime with them, snobbishness and fear...." The 'change' included black children who began to be harassed with stones thrown at them, white children, previously members of the integrated Brownie troop, told they could no longer belong, and parents who had "...a lack of manners and respect...." The police, said Mrs. Lawrence, were active participants in the harassment of black children in Mount Laurel.

With Ramblewood came other residential developments and a boom as well in industrial and commercial building. Middle income blacks were always dotted throughout these developments

with professionals, sports and television personalities among them. Mrs. Lawrence noted that she knew several of these residents since her brother Dave Lawrence was a prominent football player.

While Mount Laurel was booming, efforts were being made to assist low income, poor communities as well. To this end, the Mount Laurel Community Action Program, which was an offshoot of the Burlington County agency, formed the Springville Action Committee to provide a variety of assistance, including social service and housing to this "blighted area" of Mount Laurel. Mrs. Lawrence described the Springville area as originally a Jewish summer community prior to World War II when Fort Dix was in its heyday. These summer residents raised chickens on their properties and during the late 1940's, early 1950's, when the properties were abandoned, the chicken houses were converted into apartments where poor blacks, whites and some Puerto Ricans lived. Mrs. Lawrence recalled that as late as fourteen years ago her daughter lived in one of those apartments which one could still tell had been a chicken house. She said the conditions there were very bad to the extent that "...raw sewage came up into the backyards, sometimes into the bathtubs...."

It was to correct these and similar conditions that the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs supplied a seed grant to the Mount Laurel Community Action Program to build low income housing on Hartford Road in Springville. The Mount Laurel Planning Board turned the project down. Outraged, nine private citizens, including Mrs. Lawrence, sought legal counsel to determine if they could sue Mount Laurel Township and its

Planning Board. In a strictly economic suit, the New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in 1975, in what is now know as the Mount Laurel I decision, that the township discriminated through its local zoning ordinances against poor and low income people.

Mount Laurel did not comply with the spirit, much less the letter, of this decision. In fact, around 1979 or 1980, Mrs. Lawrence recalls, Mount Laurel attempted to rezone the area in which she lived into an industrial zone. A petition was gathered with the signatures of all the black and white residents in this area and presented at the planning board meeting which was attended by all the petitioners. The President of the Mount Laurel Planning Board, a Mr. Campbell, told Mrs. Lawrence that he did not believe the signatures were authentic and wanted them notarized though all the petitioners were in the meeting room at the time. But Mayor Traino interceded at this point and said that he believed the signatures to be authentic and noted that he knew that these residents had lived there for generations. The industrial rezoning was defeated.

Mrs. Lawrence seemed resigned but resolute about what is a constant battle for her and others in Mount Laurel. She said, though her family is poor, they are educated and not asking for a handout. (Mrs. Lawrence attended Burlington County College, Glassboro State and Bank Street Colleges concentrating in early childhood education.) A resident of Ramblewood wrote her a letter asking her if people got together and bought her a house and paid the taxes, would she be happy? This is clearly not the point for Mrs. Lawrence and others who merely wish the right to

have decent, safe and affordable housing built in which to live in the communities in which they have always lived.

The 1980 census figures show Mount Laurel's total population as 17,614 with 806 black residents or 4.6 percent of the total population.¹⁴

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

Are Moorestown's zoning ordinances as restrictive as Mount Laurel's? Armstead and Carl S. Bisgaier, Esq. say they're worse. [The late] Congressman Forsythe, upon hearing these comments, said, "I suspect that's a fair statement." But what of the Moorestown Ecumenical Neighborhood Development Corporation's efforts, particularly, the Beech Street project? Bisgaier commented "...what was that--13 units?" One problem with Moorestown, he felt, is that since it is such an attractive community, land acquisition is highly competitive, thus difficult for developers interested in pursuing low income projects without municipal support. [The late] Congressman Forsythe, a Moorestown resident, noted that another problem--that of the historic unwillingness of the town council in Moorestown to confront the issue. He stated, "...Mount Laurel II has not produced any real movement in Moorestown..." but because of the push by the community coalition of churches, he "...think (s) there's a move to provide for public housing..." among town council members.

Some have said that the Mount Laurel lawsuit was one manufactured by the attorneys; that, in fact, the attorneys went searching for plaintiffs, selected Mount Laurel as the sample township and having identified the ideal plaintiffs, persuaded

them to litigate. I posed these thoughts to Carl S. Bisgaier, Chief Counsel for the Mount Laurel plaintiffs, former Director of the Division of Public Interest Advocacy, now in private practice in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, who along with Kenneth E. Meiser and Peter J. O'Conner, litigated the case. Bisgaier stated that this was not the case, that Ethel Lawrence and the other eight plaintiffs brought their case to the attorneys after the Mount Laurel Planning Board rejected their request to build low income housing on Hartford Road. Bisgaier further noted that a popular rumor as well was that Mrs. Lawrence and the other individual plaintiffs were recent residents of Mount Laurel. The exact opposite was true. He felt that it was precisely because Mrs. Lawrence had lived there all her life, that her ancestors dated back to the pre-Civil War era in Mount Laurel and that they had been, or so they thought, an integral part of community life in Mount Laurel for so many years that she was determined to sue the township and pursue the case until its end. Bisgaier said he thought the plaintiffs had never expected to be turned down by the Planning Board, they they were "genuinely shocked." It was his view "...in 1968, it was the first time they realized they were a minority...."

Notes

1. George DeCou, Moorestown and her Neighbors, (Moorestown, N.J.: Historical Society of Moorestown, 1973), p. 13.
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3. Ibid., p. 16.
4. Clement Alexander Price, Freedom Not Far Distant - A Documentary History of Afro-Americans in New Jersey, (Newark, N.J.: New Jersey Historical Society, 1980), p. 21.
5. Ernest Lyght, Path of Freedom, The Black Presence in New Jersey's Burlington County 1659-1900, (Cherry Hill, N.J.: E&E Publishing House, 1978), p. 25.
6. Ibid., p. 72.
7. DeCou, Moorestown and Her Neighbors, pp. 61, 63.
8. State Data Center, New Jersey 1980 Census Counts of Population by Race and Spanish Origin, (Trenton, N.J.: New Jersey Department of Labor and Industry, 1981), p. 8.
9. Barbara Picken and Gail Greenberg, Mount Laurel: A Centennial History, (Mount Laurel, 1972), frontispiece.
10. Ibid., p. 22.
11. Lyght, Path of Freedom, pp. 31-32.
12. Ibid., p. 47.
13. Picken and Greenberg, Mount Laurel, p. 19.
14. State Data Center, New Jersey 1980 Census Counts of Population by Race and Spanish Origin, p. 8.

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